THE STANDARD EDITION
OF THE COMPLETE PSYCHOLOGICAL WORKS OF

SIGMUND FREUD

Translated from the German under the General Editorship of

JAMES STRACHEY

In Collaboration with

ANNA FREUD

Assisted by

ALIX STRACHEY and ALAN TYSON

VOLUME XXIII

(1937–1939)

Moses and Monotheism

An Outline of Psycho-Analysis

and

Other Works

LONDON

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VOLUME XXIII

Freud's study at 20 Maresfield Gardens, London

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CONTENTS

VOLUME TWENTY-THREE

MOSES AND MONOTHEISM: THREE ESSAYS (1939 [1934–38])

Editor's Note *page* 3

A Note on the Transcription of Proper Names 6

I MOSES AN EGYPTIAN 7

II IF MOSES WAS AN EGYPTIAN . . . 17

III MOSES, HIS PEOPLE AND MONOTHEIST RELIGION 54

PART I

Prefatory Note I ([Vienna], before March, 1938) 54

Prefatory Note II ([London], June 1938) 57

A. The Historical Premiss 59

B. The Latency Period and Tradition 66

C. The Analogy 72

D. Application 80

E. Difficulties 92

PART II

Summary and Recapitulation 103

A. The People of Israel 105

B. The Great Man 107

C. The Advance in Intellectuality 111

D. Renunciation of Instinct 116

E. What is True in Religion 122

F. The Return of the Repressed 124

G. Historical Truth 127

H. The Historical Development 132

AN OUTLINE OF PSYCHO-ANALYSIS
(1940 [1938])

Editor's Note *page* 141
Preface 144

PART I [THE MIND AND ITS WORKINGS]

Chapter I. The Psychical Apparatus 144
Chapter II. The Theory of the Instincts 148
Chapter III. The Development of the Sexual Function 152
Chapter IV. Psychical Qualities 157
Chapter V. Dream-Interpretation as an Illustration 165

PART II THE PRACTICAL TASK

Chapter VI. The Technique of Psycho-Analysis 172
Chapter VII. An Example of Psycho-Analytic Work 183

PART III THE THEORETICAL YIELD

Chapter VIII. The Psychical Apparatus and the External World 195
Chapter IX. The Internal World 205

ANALYSIS TERMINABLE AND INTERMINABLE (1937) 209
Editor's Note 211
Analysis Terminable and Interminable 216

CONSTRUCTIONS IN ANALYSIS (1937) 255

SPLITTING OF THE EGO IN THE PROCESS OF DEFENCE (1940 [1938]) 271
Editor's Note 273
Splitting of the Ego in the Process of Defence 275

SOME ELEMENTARY LESSONS IN PSYCHO-ANALYSIS (1940 [1938]) 279

A COMMENT ON ANTI-SEMITISM (1938) 287
Editor's Note 289
A Comment on Anti-Semitism 291

SHORTER WRITINGS (1937–1938)

Lou Andreas-Salomé *page* 297
Findings, Ideas, Problems 299
Anti-Semitism in England 301

BIBLIOGRAPHY AND AUTHOR INDEX 303

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS 312

GENERAL INDEX 313

ILLUSTRATIONS

Freud's study at 20 Maresfield Gardens, London *frontispiece*

Freud reading the manuscript of *Moses and Monotheism* in London, 1938 *facing page* 57

The first page of Freud's manuscript of *An Outline of Psycho-Analysis* *facing page* 141

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MOSES AND MONOTHEISM: THREE ESSAYS (1939 [1934–38])

EDITOR'S NOTE

DER MANN MOSES UND DIE MONOTHEISTISCHE RELIGION: DREI ABHANDLUNGEN

(*a*) GERMAN EDITIONS:

1939 Amsterdam: Verlag Allert de Lange. Pp. 241.
1950 *G.W.*, **16**, 101–246.

(*b*) ENGLISH TRANSLATION:

Moses and Monotheism

1939 London: Hogarth Press and Institute of Psycho-Analysis. Pp. 223. New York: Knopf. Pp. viii + 218. (Tr. Katherine Jones.)

The present translation is by James Strachey.

The first two of the three essays that make up this work appeared originally in 1937 in *Imago*, **23** (1), 5–13 and (4), 387–419; English translations of these two appeared in *Int. J. Psycho-Anal.*, **19** (3) (1938), 291–8, and **20** (1) (1939), 1–32. Section C of Part II of the third essay was read on the author's behalf by Anna Freud at the Paris International Psycho-Analytical Congress on August 2, 1938, and was afterwards published separately in *Int. Z. Psychoanal. Imago*, **24** (1/2) (1939), 6–9, under the title 'Der Fortschritt in der Geistigkeit' ('The Advance in Intellectuality'). The first essay and the first three sections of the second essay were included in *Almanach 1938*, 9–43. Only a very few unimportant changes were made in these earlier publications when they were included in the complete work. These changes are noted in the present edition.

It was apparently during the summer of 1934 that Freud completed his first draft of this book, with the title: *The Man Moses, a Historical Novel* (Jones, 1957, 206). In a long letter to Arnold Zweig of September 30, 1934 (included in Freud, 1960*a*, Letter 276), he gave an account of the book, as well

as of his reasons for not publishing it. These were much the same as those which he explains in the first of his prefatory notes to the third essay below (p. 54)—namely, on the one hand, doubts as to whether his argument was sufficiently well established and, on the other hand, fears of the reactions to its publication by the Roman Catholic hierarchy who were at that time dominant in the Austrian government. From the account which he then gave of the work itself, it sounds essentially the same as what we now have—even its form, in three separate sections, has remained unchanged. Nevertheless, changes must have been made in it. Freud was constantly expressing his dissatisfaction with it—in particular with the third essay. There appears to have been a general re-writing during the summer of 1936, though what we are told on the subject is far from clear (Jones, 1957, 388). At all events, the first essay was published at the beginning of the following year (1937) and the second at its end.[1] But the third essay was still held back and only finally passed for printing after Freud's arrival in England in the spring of 1938. The book was printed that autumn in Holland and the English translation was published in the following March.

What is perhaps likely to strike a reader first about *Moses and Monotheism* is a certain unorthodoxy, or even eccentricity, in its construction: three essays of greatly differing length, two prefaces, both situated at the beginning of the third essay, and a third preface situated half-way through that same essay, constant recapitulations and repetitions—such irregularities are unknown elsewhere in Freud's writings, and he himself points them out and apologizes for them more than once. Their explanation? Undoubtedly the circumstances of the book's composition: the long period—four years or more—during which it was being constantly revised, and the acute external difficulties of the final phase, with a succession of political disorders in Austria culminating in the Nazi occupation of Vienna and Freud's enforced migration to England. That the outcome of these influences was to be seen only in the restricted and temporary field of this single volume is very conclusively proved by the work which immediately followed this one—the *Outline*

[1] The latter was finished on August 11, 1937 (Letter 290 in Freud, 1960*a*).

of Psycho-Analysis, among the most concise and well-organized of Freud's writings.

But if *Moses and Monotheism* is judged to lack something in its form of presentation, that is not to imply a criticism of the interest of its content or of the cogency of its arguments. Its historical basis is no doubt a matter for expert dispute, but the ingenuity with which the psychological developments fit in with the premisses is likely to persuade the reader who is without prepossession. Those, in particular, who are familiar with the psycho-analysis of the individual will be fascinated to see the same succession of developments exhibited in an analysis of a national group. The whole work is, of course, to be regarded as a continuation of Freud's earlier studies of the origins of human social organization in *Totem and Taboo* (1912–13) and *Group Psychology* (1921*c*). A very elaborate and informative discussion of the book will be found in Chapter XIII of the third volume of Ernest Jones's biography (1957), 388–401.

A NOTE ON THE TRANSCRIPTION OF PROPER NAMES

THE occurrence in *Moses and Monotheism* of a large number of Egyptian and Hebrew names presents the translator with some special problems.

Egyptian writing does not in general record the vowels, so that the actual pronunciation of Egyptian names can only be guessed by a hazardous process of inferences. Various conventional renderings have therefore been adopted by various authorities. For instance, in discussing this question, Gardiner (1927, Appendix B) quotes four different versions of the name of the owner of a well-known tomb at Thebes: Tehutihetep, Thuthotep, Thothotpou and Dhuthotpe. Just as many varieties are to be found of the name of the 'heretic king', who figures so prominently here in Freud's argument. The choice seems to be governed a good deal by nationality. Thus, in the past, English Egyptologists were inclined to Akhnaton, the Germans preferred Echnaton, the American (Breasted) chose Ikhnaton, and the great Frenchman (Maspero) decided for Khouniatonou. Faced by these alluring alternatives, the present translator has fallen back on the humdrum version which has for many years been adopted by the *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* and seems now to be the one becoming most generally accepted, at least in English-speaking countries: Akhenaten.[1] This same authority has been generally followed in the transcription of all other Egyptian names.

As regards Old Testament names, the answer has been simpler, and the forms found in the English Authorized Version have been employed. It must be added, however, that the unmentionable name of the Deity is here given the transcription regularly found in the works of English scholars: Yahweh.

[1] See, for example, Lindon Smith, *Tombs, Temples and Ancient Art*, University of Oklahoma Press, 1956, and *The Times*, April 2, 1963, p. 14, column 5. Different versions of the name will necessarily be found where Freud quotes from other writers.

I

MOSES AN EGYPTIAN

To deprive a people of the man whom they take pride in as the greatest of their sons is not a thing to be gladly or carelessly undertaken, least of all by someone who is himself one of them. But we cannot allow any such reflection to induce us to put the truth aside in favour of what are supposed to be national interests; and, moreover, the clarification of a set of facts may be expected to bring us a gain in knowledge.

The man Moses,[1] who set the Jewish people free, who gave them their laws and founded their religion, dates from such remote times that we cannot evade a preliminary enquiry as to whether he was a historical personage or a creature of legend. If he lived, it was in the thirteenth, though it may have been in the fourteenth, century before Christ. We have no information about him except from the sacred books of the Jews and their traditions as recorded in writing. Although a decision on the question thus lacks final certainty, an overwhelming majority of historians have nevertheless pronounced in favour of the view that Moses was a real person and that the Exodus from Egypt associated with him did in fact take place. It is justly argued that the later history of the people of Israel would be incomprehensible if this premiss were not accepted. Indeed, science to-day has become altogether more circumspect and handles traditions far more indulgently than in the early days of historical criticism.

The first thing that attracts our attention about the figure of Moses is his name, which is 'Mosheh' in Hebrew. 'What is its origin?' we may ask, 'and what does it mean?' As we know, the account in the second chapter of *Exodus* already provides an answer. We are told there that the Egyptian princess who rescued the infant boy from exposure in the Nile gave him that name, putting forward an etymological reason, 'because I drew

[1] [Moses is so spoken of in the Bible (cf. *Numbers*, xii, 3), and the phrase occurs repeatedly in this work. It will be recalled that the title of the German original is, literally, *The Man Moses and Monotheist Religion*.]

him out of the water'.[1] This explanation, however, is clearly inadequate. 'The Biblical interpretation of the name as "he who was drawn out of the water" ', argues a writer in the *Jüdisches Lexikon*,[2] 'is popular etymology, with which, to begin with, it is impossible to harmonize the *active* form of the Hebrew word –for "*Mosheh*" can at most only mean "he who draws out".' We can support this rejection by two further arguments: in the first place, it is absurd to attribute to an Egyptian princess a derivation of the name from the Hebrew, and secondly, the water out of which the child was drawn was most probably not the water of the Nile.

On the other hand, a suspicion has long been expressed, and in many different quarters, that the name 'Moses' is derived from the Egyptian vocabulary. Instead of enumerating all the authorities who have argued in this sense, I will quote the relevant passage from a comparatively recent book, *The Dawn of Conscience* (1934), by J. H. Breasted, a writer whose *History of Egypt* (1906) is regarded as a standard work: 'It is important to notice that his name, Moses, was Egyptian. It is simply the Egyptian word "mose" meaning "child", and is an abridgement of a fuller form of such names as "Amen-mose" meaning "Amon-a-child" or "Ptah-mose" meaning "Ptah-a-child", these forms themselves being likewise abbreviations for the complete form "Amon-(has-given)-a-child" or "Ptah-(has-given)-a-child". The abbreviation "child" early became a convenient rapid form for the cumbrous full name, and the name Mose, "child", is not uncommon on the Egyptian monuments. The father of Moses without doubt prefixed to his son's name that of an Egyptian god like Amon or Ptah, and this divine name was gradually lost in current usage, till the boy was called "Mose". (The final *s* is an addition drawn from the Greek translation of the Old Testament. It is not in the Hebrew which has "Mosheh").'[3] I have repeated this passage word for word and I am by no means ready to share responsibility for its details. I am also rather surprised that Breasted has failed to mention precisely the analogous theophorous

[1] [*Exodus*, ii, 10. In this translation, all quotations from the Scriptures are given in the Authorized Version.]

[2] Herlitz and Kirschner (1930), **4** (1), 303. [The contributor quoted was M. Soloweitschik.]

[3] Breasted, 1934, 350.

names which figure in the list of Egyptian kings, such as Ahmose, Thoth-mose and Ra-mose.

Now we should have expected that one of the many people who have recognized that 'Moses' is an Egyptian name would also have drawn the conclusion or would at least have considered the possibility that the person who bore this Egyptian name may himself have been an Egyptian. In relation to modern times we have no hesitation in drawing such conclusions, though nowadays people bear not one name but two —a family name and a personal name—and though a change of name or the adoption of a similar one in fresh circumstances is not beyond possibility. Thus we are not in the least surprised to find it confirmed that the poet Chamisso[1] was French by birth, that Napoleon Buonaparte, on the other hand, was of Italian extraction and that Benjamin Disraeli was indeed an Italian Jew, as we should expect from his name. In relation to ancient and primitive times, one would have thought that a conclusion such as this as to a person's nationality based on his name would have seemed far more reliable and in fact unimpeachable. Nevertheless, so far as I know, no historian has drawn this conclusion in the case of Moses— not even any of those who, once again like Breasted himself (1934, 354), are ready to assume that 'Moses was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians'.[2]

What prevented their doing so cannot be judged with certainty. Possibly their reverence for Biblical tradition was invincible. Possibly the notion that the man Moses might have been anything but a Hebrew seemed too monstrous. However that may be, it emerges that the recognition that the name of Moses is Egyptian has not been looked upon as affording decisive evidence of his origin, and that no further conclusions

[1] [Adelbert von Chamisso (1781–1838) author of *Frauenliebe und -leben*, a cycle of lyrics set to music by Schumann, and *Peter Schlemihl*, the story of the man who sold his shadow.]

[2] Although the suspicion that Moses was an Egyptian has been voiced often enough without reference to his name, from the earliest times up to the present. [Freud had quoted a comic anecdote to that effect in his *Introductory Lectures* (1916–17), *Standard Ed.*, **15**, 161. This footnote appeared first in the 1939 edition. It is not included in the original *Imago* version of 1937 or in the English translation of 1939.—The phrase quoted from Breasted is in fact derived from a speech by St. Stephen (*Acts*, vii, 22).]

have been drawn from it. If the question of this great man's nationality is regarded as important, it would seem to be desirable to bring forward fresh material that would help towards answering it.

That is what my short paper aims at doing. Its claim to be given a place in the pages of *Imago* rests on the fact that the substance of what it has to contribute is an application of psycho-analysis. The argument arrived at in this way will undoubtedly only impress that minority of readers who are familiar with analytic thinking and who are able to appreciate its findings. To them, however, it will, I hope, appear significant.

In 1909 Otto Rank, who was at that time still under my influence, published, following a suggestion of mine, a book bearing the title *Der Mythus von der Geburt des Helden.*[1] It deals with the fact that 'almost all the prominent civilized nations . . . began at an early stage to glorify their heroes, legendary kings and princes, founders of religions, dynasties, empires or cities, in brief their national heroes, in a number of poetic tales and legends. The history of the birth and of the early life of these personalities came to be especially invested with phantastic features, which, in different peoples, even though widely separated by space and entirely independent of each other, present a baffling similarity and in part, indeed, a literal conformity. Many investigators have been impressed with this fact, which has long been recognized.' [P.1.] If, following Rank, we construct (by a technique a little like Galton's[2]) an 'average legend' that brings into prominence the essential features of all these stories, we arrive at the following picture:

'The hero is the child of the *most aristocratic* parents; usually the son of a king.

'His conception is preceded by difficulties, such as abstinence or prolonged barrenness or his parents having to have

[1] [*The Myth of the Birth of the Hero*] It is far from being my intention to belittle the value of Rank's independent contributions to the work. [The quotations which follow are based on the translation by Robbins and Jelliffe, first published in 1914, to which the page references in the text also relate. Some changes have been made in the interests of greater accuracy.]

[2] [Freud has in mind Galton's 'composite photographs' to which he was fond of referring. See, for instance, *The Interpretation of Dreams* (1900*a*), *Standard Ed.*, 4, 139.]

intercourse in secret owing to external prohibitions or obstacles. During the pregnancy, or even earlier, there is a prophecy (in the form of a dream or oracle) cautioning against his birth, usually threatening danger to his father.

'As a result of this the new-born child is condemned to death or to *exposure*, usually by the orders of *his father or of someone representing him*; as a rule he is given over to the *water* in a *casket*.

'He is afterwards rescued by animals or by *humble people* (such as shepherds) and is suckled by a *female animal* or by a *humble woman*.

'After he has grown up, he rediscovers his aristocratic parents after highly variegated experiences, *takes his revenge on his father*, on the one hand, and is *acknowledged* on the other and achieves greatness and fame.' [P. 61.]

The oldest of the historical figures to whom this myth of birth is attached is Sargon of Agade, the founder of Babylon (*c.* 2800 B.C.). For us in particular it will not be without interest to quote the account of it, which is attributed to him himself:

'Sargon, the mighty King, the King of Agade am I. *My mother was a Vestal, my father I knew not*, while my father's brother dwelt in the mountains. In my city, Azupirani, which lies on the bank of the Euphrates, my mother, the Vestal, conceived me. *Secretly she bore me. She laid me in a coffer made of reeds*, closed my doorway with pitch, and *let me down into the river*, which did not drown me. The river carried me to Akki, the drawer of water. Akki, the drawer of water, lifted me out in the kindness of his heart. *Akki, the drawer of water, brought me up as his own son.* Akki, the drawer of water, made me his gardener. While I worked as a gardener, [the goddess] Ishtar grew fond of me, I became King and for forty-five years I held kingly sway.' [Pp. 12–13.]

The names most familiar to us in the series which begins with Sargon of Agade are Moses, Cyrus and Romulus. But in addition to these Rank has brought together a whole number of other heroic figures from poetry or legend, of whom the same story of their youth is told, either in its entirety or in easily recognizable fragments—including Oedipus, Karna, Paris, Telephos, Perseus, Heracles, Gilgamesh, Amphion and Zethos, and others.[1]

[1] [Karna was a hero in the Sanskrit epic *Mahabharata*, Gilgamesh was a Babylonian hero and the remainder were figures in Greek mythology.]

Rank's researches have made us acquainted with the source and purpose of this myth. I need only refer to them with some brief indications. A hero is someone who has had the courage to rebel against his father and has in the end victoriously overcome him. Our myth traces this struggle back as far as the individual's prehistory, for it represents him as being born against his father's will and rescued despite his father's evil intention. The exposure in a casket is an unmistakable symbolic representation of birth: the casket is the womb and the water is the amniotic fluid. The parent-child relationship is represented in countless dreams by pulling out of the water or rescuing from the water.[1] When a people's imagination attaches the myth of birth which we are discussing to an outstanding figure, it is intending in that way to recognize him as a hero and to announce that he has fulfilled the regular pattern of a hero's life. In fact, however, the source of the whole poetic fiction is what is known as a child's 'family romance', in which the son reacts to a change in his emotional relation to his parents and in particular to his father.[2] A child's earliest years are dominated by an enormous overvaluation of his father; in accordance with this a king and queen in dreams and fairy tales invariably stand for parents. Later, under the influence of rivalry and of disappointment in real life, the child begins to detach himself from his parents and to adopt a critical attitude towards his father. Thus the two families in the myth—the aristocratic one and the humble one—are both of them reflections of the child's own family as they appeared to him in successive periods of his life.

We may fairly say that these explanations make the widespread and uniform nature of myths of the birth of heroes fully intelligible. For that reason it is all the more deserving of interest that the legend of the birth and exposure of Moses occupies a special position and, indeed, in one essential respect contradicts the rest.

Let us start from the two families between which, according to the legend, the child's destiny is played out. According to the

[1] [See, for instance, *The Interpretation of Dreams* (1900*a*), *Standard Ed.* **5**, 399–402.]

[2] [Cf. Freud's paper 'Family Romances' (1909*c*). That paper was first published as a part of the volume by Rank which has been quoted above.]

analytic interpretation, as we know, the families are one and the same and are only differentiated chronologically. In the typical form of the legend, it is the first family, the one into which the child is born, which is the aristocratic one, most often of royal rank; the second family, the one in which the child grows up, is the one that is humble or has fallen on evil days. This tallies, moreover, with the circumstances [of the 'family romance'] to which the interpretation traces the legend back. Only in the legend of Oedipus is this difference blurred: the child which has been exposed by one royal family is received by another royal couple. It can scarcely be by chance, one feels, that precisely in this example the original identity of the two families may be dimly perceived in the legend itself. The social contrast between the two families provides the myth which, as we know, is designed to stress the heroic nature of a great man with a second function which becomes of special significance when applied to historical personages. For the myth can also be employed to create a patent of nobility for the hero, to raise his social standing. To the Medes, Cyrus was a foreign conqueror; but by means of a legend of exposure he became the grandson of their king. The same applies to Romulus. If any such person existed, he must have been an adventurer of unknown origin, an upstart; the legend, however, made him offspring and heir of the royal house of Alba Longa.

With Moses things were quite different. In his case the first family, elsewhere the aristocratic one, was sufficiently modest. He was the child of Jewish Levites. But the place of the second family, elsewhere the humble one, was taken by the royal house of Egypt; the princess brought him up as her own son. This deviation from type has puzzled many people. Eduard Meyer,[1] and others following him, assumed that originally the legend was different. Pharaoh, according to them, had been warned by a prophetic dream[2] that a son born to his daughter would bring danger to him and his kingdom. He therefore had the child exposed in the Nile after his birth. But he was rescued by Jewish people and brought up as their child. For 'nationalist motives' (as Rank puts it[3]) the legend would then have been given the modified form in which we know it.

[1] [Meyer, 1906, 46 f.]

[2] This is also mentioned in the account given by Flavius Josephus.

[3] Rank, 1909, 80 *n.*

A moment's reflection, however, tells us that an original legend of Moses like this, one no longer deviating from the other legends, cannot have existed. For it was either of Egyptian or of Jewish origin. The first alternative is ruled out: the Egyptians had no motive for glorifying Moses, since he was no hero to them. We are to suppose, then, that the legend was created among the Jewish people—that is to say, that it was attached in its familiar form [i.e. in the typical form of a birth-legend] to the figure of their leader. But it was totally unsuitable for that purpose, for what would be the use to a people of a legend which made their great man into a foreigner?

The legend of Moses, in the form in which we have it to-day, falls notably short of its secret intention. If Moses was not of royal birth, the legend could not stamp him as a hero; if it left him as a Jewish child, it had done nothing to raise his social standing. Only one small fragment of the entire myth remains effective: the assurance that the child had survived in the face of powerful external forces. (This feature recurs in the story of the childhood of Jesus, in which King Herod takes over the role of Pharaoh.) Thus we are in fact free to suppose that some later and clumsy adapter of the material of the legend found an opportunity for introducing into the story of his hero Moses something which resembled the classical exposure legends marking out a hero, but which, on account of the special circumstances of the case, was not applicable to Moses.

Our investigations might have had to rest content with this inconclusive and, moreover, uncertain outcome, and they might have done nothing towards answering the question of whether Moses was an Egyptian. There is, however, another and perhaps more hopeful line of approach to an assessment of the legend of exposure.

Let us return to the two families of the myth. At the level of analytic interpretation they are, as we know, identical; whereas at the level of the myth they are differentiated into an aristocratic family and a humble one. Where, however, the figure to whom the myth is attached is a historical one, there is a third level – that of reality. One of the families is the real one, in which the person in question (the great man) was actually born and grew up; the other is fictitious, fabricated by the myth in pursuit of its own intentions. As a rule the humble family is the

real one and the aristocratic family the fabricated one. The situation in the case of Moses seemed somehow different. And here the new line of approach will perhaps lead to a clarification: in every instance which it has been possible to test, the first family, the one from which the child was exposed, was the invented one, and the second one, in which he was received and grew up, was the real one. If we have the courage to recognize this assertion as universally true and as applying also to the legend of Moses, then all at once we see things clearly: Moses was an Egyptian probably an aristocrat—whom the legend was designed to turn into a Jew. And that would be our conclusion. The exposure in the water was at its correct point in the story; but, in order to fit in with the fresh purpose, its aim had to be somewhat violently twisted. From being a way of sacrificing the child, it was turned into a means of rescuing him.

The deviation of the legend of Moses from all the others of its kind can be traced back to a special feature of his history. Whereas normally a hero, in the course of his life, rises above his humble beginnings, the heroic life of the man Moses began with his stepping down from his exalted position and descending to the level of the Children of Israel.

We started on this brief enquiry in the expectation of deriving a fresh argument from it in support of the suspicion that Moses was an Egyptian. We have seen that the first argument, based on his name, failed with many people to carry conviction.[1] We must be prepared to find that this new argument, based on an analysis of the legend of exposure, may have no better success. It will no doubt be objected that the circumstances of the

[1] Thus Eduard Meyer writes (1905, 651): 'The name "Moses" is probably Egyptian, and the name "Pinchas" in the priestly family of Shiloh . . . is undoubtedly Egyptian. Of course this does not prove that these families were of Egyptian origin, but, no doubt, that they had connections with Egypt.' We may ask, to be sure, what sort of connections this is supposed to make us think of. [This paper by Meyer (1905) is a *résumé* of a very much longer one (1906) where the question of these Egyptian names is further examined (450–1). From this it appears that there were two men called 'Pinchas' ('Phinehas' in the Authorized Version) one a grandson of Aaron (*Exodus*, vi, 25 and *Numbers*, xxv, 7) and the other a priest at Shiloh (I *Samuel*, i, 3), both of them Levites. (Cf. p. 39 below.) Shiloh was the place where the Ark was stationed before its ultimate removal to Jerusalem. (Cf. *Joshua*, xviii, 1.)]

construction and transformation of legends are, after all, too obscure to justify a conclusion such as ours and that the traditions surrounding the heroic figure of Moses with all their confusion and contradictions and their unmistakable signs of centuries of continuous and tendentious revisions and superimpositions—are bound to baffle every effort to bring to light the kernel of historical truth that lies behind them. I do not myself share this dissenting attitude but neither am I in a position to refute it.

If no more certainty could be reached than this, why, it may be asked, have I brought this enquiry into public notice at all? I am sorry to say that even my justification for doing so cannot go beyond hints. For if one allows oneself to be carried away by the two arguments which I have put forward here, and if one sets out to take the hypothesis seriously that Moses was an aristocratic Egyptian, very interesting and far-reaching prospects are opened up. With the help of some not very remote assumptions, we shall, I believe, be able to understand the motives which led Moses in the unusual step he took and, closely related to this, to obtain a grasp of the possible basis of a number of the characteristics and peculiarities of the laws and religion which he gave to the Jewish people; and we shall even be led on to important considerations regarding the origin of monotheist religions in general. Such weighty conclusions cannot, however, be founded on psychological probabilities alone. Even if one accepts the fact of Moses being an Egyptian as a first historical foothold, one would need to have at least a second firm fact in order to defend the wealth of emerging possibilities against the criticism of their being a product of the imagination and too remote from reality. Objective evidence of the period to which the life of Moses and with it the Exodus from Egypt are to be referred would perhaps have fulfilled this requirement. But this has not been obtainable, and it will therefore be better to leave unmentioned any further implications of the discovery that Moses was an Egyptian.

II

IF MOSES WAS AN EGYPTIAN . . .

In an earlier contribution to this periodical,[1] I attempted to bring up a fresh argument in support of the hypothesis that the man Moses, the Liberator and law-giver of the Jewish people, was not a Jew but an Egyptian. It had long been observed that his name was derived from the Egyptian vocabulary, though the fact had not been properly appreciated. What I added was that the interpretation of the myth of exposure which was linked with Moses necessarily led to the inference that he was an Egyptian whom the needs of a people sought to make into a Jew. I remarked at the end of my paper that important and far-reaching implications followed from the hypothesis that Moses was an Egyptian, but that I was not prepared to argue publicly in favour of these implications, since they were based only on psychological probabilities and lacked any objective proof. The greater the importance of the views arrived at in this way, the more strongly one feels the need to beware of exposing them without a secure basis to the critical assaults of the world around one—like a bronze statue with feet of clay. Not even the most tempting probability is a protection against error; even if all the parts of a problem seem to fit together like the pieces of a jig-saw puzzle, one must reflect that what is probable is not necessarily the truth and that the truth is not always probable. And lastly, it did not seem attractive to find oneself classed with the schoolmen and Talmudists who delight in exhibiting their ingenuity without regard to how remote from reality their thesis may be.

Notwithstanding these hesitations, which weigh as much with me to-day as they did before, the outcome of my conflicting motives is a decision to produce the present sequel to my earlier communication. But once again this is not the whole story nor the most important part of the whole story.

[1] *Imago*, **23** (1937). [Essay I above.]

(1)

If, then, Moses was an Egyptian - our first yield from this hypothesis is a fresh enigma and one which it is hard to solve. If a people or a tribe[1] sets out upon a great undertaking, it is only to be expected that one of its members will take his place as their leader or will be chosen for that post. But it is not easy to guess what could induce an aristocratic Egyptian - a prince, perhaps, or a priest or high official - to put himself at the head of a crowd of immigrant foreigners at a backward level of civilization and to leave his country with them. The well-known contempt felt by the Egyptians for foreign nationals makes such a proceeding particularly unlikely. Indeed I could well believe that this has been precisely why even those historians who have recognized that the man's name was Egyptian, and who have ascribed to him all the wisdom of the Egyptians [p. 9], have been unwilling to accept the obvious possibility that Moses was an Egyptian.

This first difficulty is promptly followed by another. We must not forget that Moses was not only the political leader of the Jews settled in Egypt but was also their law-giver and educator and forced them into the service of a new religion, which to this very day is known after him as the Mosaic one. But is it so easy for one single man to create a new religion? And if anyone wishes to influence another person's religion, would he not most naturally convert him to his own? The Jewish people in Egypt were certainly not without a religion of some form or other; and if Moses, who gave them a new one, was an Egyptian, the presumption cannot be put aside that this other new religion was the Egyptian one.

There is something that stands in the way of this possibility: the fact of there being the most violent contrast between the Jewish religion which is attributed to Moses and the religion of Egypt. The former is a rigid monotheism on the grand scale: there is only one God, he is the sole God, omnipotent, unapproachable; his aspect is more than human eyes can tolerate, no image must be made of him, even his name may not be spoken. In the Egyptian religion there is an almost innumerable host of deities of varying dignity and origin: a few personifica-

[1] We have no notion of what numbers were concerned in the Exodus from Egypt.

tions of great natural forces such as heaven and earth, sun and moon, an occasional abstraction such as Ma'at (truth or justice) or a caricature such as the dwarf-like Bes; but most of them local gods, dating from the period when the country was divided into numerous provinces, with the shape of animals, as though they had not yet completed their evolution from the old totem animals, with no sharp distinctions between them, and scarcely differing in the functions allotted to them. The hymns in honour of these gods say almost the same things about all of them, and identify them with one another unhesitatingly, in a manner hopelessly confusing to us. The names of gods are combined with one another, so that one of them may almost be reduced to being an epithet of the other. Thus, in the heyday of the 'New Kingdom' the principal god of the city of Thebes was called Amen-Re'; the first part of this compound stands for the ram-headed god of the city, while Re' is the name of the falcon-headed sun-god of On [Heliopolis]. Magical and ceremonial acts, charms and amulets dominated the service of these gods as they did the daily life of the Egyptians.

Some of these differences may easily be derived from the fundamental contrast between a strict monotheism and an unrestricted polytheism. Others are evidently the result of a difference in spiritual and intellectual[1] level, since one of these religions is very close to primitive phases [of development], while the other has risen to the heights of sublime abstraction. It may be due to these two factors that one occasionally has an impression that the contrast between the Mosaic and the Egyptian religions is a deliberate one and has been intentionally heightened—when, for instance, one of them condemns magic and sorcery in the severest terms, while in the other they proliferate with the greatest luxuriance, or when the insatiable appetite of the Egyptians for embodying their gods in clay, stone and metal (to which our museums owe so much to-day) is confronted with the harsh prohibition against making an image of any living or imagined creature.

But there is still another contrast between the two religions which is not met by the explanations we have attempted. No other people of antiquity did so much [as the Egyptians] to

[1] ['*Geistig*' is the word here translated 'spiritual and intellectual' This concept becomes of great importance towards the end of this work, especially in Section C of Part II of Essay III. Cf. the footnote on p 86]

deny death or took such pains to make existence in the next world possible. And accordingly Osiris, the god of the dead, the ruler of this other world, was the most popular and undisputed of all the gods of Egypt. On the other hand the ancient Jewish religion renounced immortality entirely; the possibility of existence continuing after death is nowhere and never mentioned. And this is all the more remarkable since later experiences have shown that belief in an after-life is perfectly well compatible with a monotheist religion.

It was our hope that the hypothesis that Moses was an Egyptian would turn out to be fruitful and illuminating in various directions. But the first conclusion we drew from that hypothesis—that the new religion which he gave to the Jews was his own Egyptian one—has been invalidated by our realization of the different, and indeed contradictory, character of the two religions.

(2)

Another possibility is opened to us by a remarkable event in the history of the Egyptian religion, an event which has only lately been recognized and appreciated. It remains possible that the religion which Moses gave to his Jewish people was nevertheless his own—that it was *an* Egyptian religion, though not *the* Egyptian religion.

In the glorious Eighteenth Dynasty, under which Egypt first became a world power, a young Pharaoh came to the throne in about the year 1375 B.C. To begin with he was called, like his father, Amenophis (IV), but later he changed his name and not only his name. This king set about forcing a new religion on his Egyptian subjects—a religion which ran contrary to their thousands-of-years-old traditions and to all the familiar habits of their lives. It was a strict monotheism, the first attempt of the kind, so far as we know, in the history of the world, and along with the belief in a single god religious intolerance was inevitably born, which had previously been alien to the ancient world and remained so long afterwards. The reign of Amenophis, however, lasted for only seventeen years. Very soon after his death in 1358 B.C., the new religion was swept away and the memory of the heretic king was proscribed. What little we know of him is derived from the ruins of the new royal

capital which he built and dedicated to his god and from the inscriptions in the rock tombs adjacent to it. Whatever we can learn about this remarkable and, indeed, unique personality is deserving of the highest interest.[1]

Every novelty must have its preliminaries and preconditions in something earlier. The origins of Egyptian monotheism can be traced back a little way with some certainty.[2] For a considerable time, tendencies had been at work among the priesthood of the sun temple at On (Heliopolis) in the direction of developing the idea of a universal god and of emphasizing the ethical side of his nature. Ma'at, the goddess of truth, order and justice, was a daughter of the sun god Re'. During the reign of Amenophis III, the father and predecessor of the reformer, the worship of the sun god had already gained a new impetus probably in opposition to Amun of Thebes, who had become too powerful. A very ancient name of the sun god, Aten or Atum, was brought into fresh prominence, and the young king found in this Aten religion a movement ready to hand, which he did not have to be the first to inspire but of which he could become an adherent.

The political conditions in Egypt had begun at this time to exercise a lasting influence on the Egyptian religion. As a result of the military exploits of the great conqueror, Tuthmosis III, Egypt had become a world power: the empire now included Nubia in the south, Palestine, Syria and a part of Mesopotamia in the north. This imperialism was reflected in religion as universalism and monotheism. Since the Pharaoh's responsibilities now embraced not only Egypt but Nubia and Syria as well, deity too was obliged to abandon its national limitation and, just as the Pharaoh was the sole and unrestricted ruler of the world known to the Egyptians, this must also apply to the Egyptians' new deity. Moreover, with the extension of the empire's frontiers, it was natural that Egypt would become more accessible to foreign influences, some of the royal wives were Asiatic princesses,[3] and it is possible that direct

[1] Breasted [1906, 356] calls him 'the first individual in human history'.

[2] What follows is in the main based on the accounts given by Breasted (1906 and 1934) and in the relevant sections of the *Cambridge Ancient History*, Vol. II [1924].

[3] This may perhaps be true even of Nefertiti, the beloved wife of Amenophis.

incitements to monotheism even made their way in from Syria.

Amenophis never denied his adherence to the sun cult of On. In the two Hymns to the Aten which have survived in the rock tombs and which were probably composed by him himself, he praises the sun as the creator and preserver of all living things both inside and outside Egypt with an ardour which is not repeated till many centuries later in the Psalms in honour of the Jewish god Yahweh. He was not content, however, with this astonishing anticipation of the scientific discovery of the effect of solar radiation. There is no doubt that he went a step further: that he did not worship the sun as a material object but as the symbol of a divine being whose energy was manifested in its rays.[1]

We should not, however, be doing justice to the king if we regarded him merely as an adherent or promoter of an Aten religion already in existence before his time. His activity was a far more energetic intervention. He introduced something new, which for the first time converted the doctrine of a universal god into monotheism—the factor of exclusiveness. In one of his hymns he declares expressly: 'O thou sole God, beside whom there is no other!' [2] And we must not forget that in assessing the new doctrine a knowledge of its *positive* contents is not enough: its *negative* side is almost equally important—a knowledge of what it rejects. It would be a mistake, too, to suppose that the new religion was completed at a single blow and sprang to life fully armed, like Athene out of the head of Zeus. Everything suggests, rather, that in the course of the reign of Amenophis it increased little by little to ever greater clarity, consistency, harshness and intolerance. It is likely that this development came about under the influence of the violent opposition to the

[1] 'But, however evident the Heliopolitan origin of the new state religion might be, it was not merely sun-worship; the word Aton was employed in the place of the old word for "god" (*nuter*), and the god is clearly distinguished from the material sun.' Breasted, 1906, 360. 'It is evident that what the king was deifying was the force by which the Sun made himself felt on earth.' Breasted, 1934, 279.—Erman (1905, 66) makes a similar judgement on a formula in honour of the god: 'These are . . . words which are meant to express as abstractly as possible that it is not the heavenly body itself that is worshipped but the being which reveals itself in it.'

[2] Breasted, 1906, 374 *n.*

king's reform which arose among the priests of Amun. In the sixth year of the reign of Amenophis this antagonism had reached such a pitch that the king changed his name, of which the proscribed name of the god Amun formed a part. Instead of 'Amenophis' he now called himself 'Akhenaten'.[1] But it was not only from his own name that he expunged that of the detested god: he erased it too from every inscription even where it occurred in the name of his father, Amenophis III. Soon after changing his name Akhenaten abandoned the Amun-dominated city of Thebes and built himself a new royal capital lower down the river, which he named Akhetaten (the horizon of the Aten). Its ruined site is now known as Tell el-'Amarna.[2]

The persecution by the king fell most harshly upon Amun, but not on him alone. Throughout the kingdom temples were closed, divine service forbidden, temple property confiscated. Indeed, the king's zeal went so far that he had the ancient monuments examined in order to have the word 'god' obliterated in them where it occurred in the plural.[3] It is not to be wondered at that these measures taken by Akhenaten provoked a mood of fanatical vindictiveness among the suppressed priesthood and unsatisfied common people, and this was able to find free expression after the king's death. The Aten religion had not become popular; it had probably remained restricted to a narrow circle surrounding the king's person. Akhenaten's end remains veiled in obscurity. We hear of a few short lived, shadowy successors from his own family. His son-law, Tut'ankhaten, was already compelled to return to Thebes and to replace the name of the god Aten in his name by that of Amun. There followed a period of anarchy till in 1350 B.C.

[1] [In the German editions the name is spelt 'Ikhnaton'] I adopt here the English spelling of the name (alternatively 'Akhenaton'). The king's new name has approximately the same meaning as his earlier one: 'The god is satisfied.' Cf. the German 'Gotthold' ['God is gracious'] and 'Gottfried' ['God is satisfied']. [This footnote is translated literally from the German editions. In fact, 'Ikhnaton' was Breasted's (American) version. For all this see the 'Note on the Transcription of Proper Names', p. 6 above.]

[2] It was there that in 1887 the discovery of such great historical importance was made of the Egyptian kings' correspondence with their friends and vassals in Asia.

[3] Breasted, 1906, 363.

a general, Haremhab, succeeded in restoring order. The glorious Eighteenth Dynasty was at an end and simultaneously its conquests in Nubia and Asia were lost. During this gloomy interregnum the ancient religions of Egypt were re-established. The Aten religion was abolished, Akhenaten's royal city was destroyed and plundered and his memory proscribed as that of a criminal.

It is with a particular purpose that we shall now emphasize a few points among the negative characteristics of the Aten religion. In the first place, everything to do with myths, magic and sorcery is excluded from it.[1] In the next place, the manner in which the sun-god was represented was no longer, as in the past, by a small pyramid and a falcon,[2] but – and this seems almost prosaic – by a round disk with rays proceeding from it, which end in human hands. In spite of all the exuberant art of the Amarna period, no other representation of the sun-god – no personal image of the Aten – has been found, and it may confidently be said that none will be found.[3] Lastly, there was complete silence about the god of the dead, Osiris, and the kingdom of the dead. Neither the hymns nor the tomb inscriptions have any knowledge of what perhaps lay closest to the hearts of the Egyptians. The contrast to the popular religion cannot be more clearly demonstrated.[4]

(3)

I should now like to venture on this conclusion: if Moses was an Egyptian and if he communicated his own religion to the Jews, it must have been Akhenaten's, the Aten religion.

[1] Weigall (1922, 120–1) says that Akhenaten would hear nothing of a Hell against whose terrors people might protect themselves with innumerable magical formulae: 'Akhnaton flung all these formulae into the fire. Djins, bogies, spirits, monsters, demigods, demons, and Osiris himself with all his court, were swept into the blaze and reduced to ashes.'

[2] [This should perhaps read 'a pyramid or a falcon'. Cf. Breasted, 1934, 278.]

[3] 'Akhnaton did not permit any graven image to be made of the Aton. The True God, said the king, had no form, and he held to this opinion throughout his life.' (Weigall, 1922, 103.)

[4] 'Nothing was to be heard any more of Osiris and his kingdom.' (Erman, 1905, 70.) 'Osiris is completely ignored. He is never mentioned in any record of Ikhnaton or in any of the tombs at Amarna.' (Breasted, 1934, 291.)

I have already compared the Jewish religion with the popular religion of Egypt and shown the opposition between them. I must now make a comparison between the Jewish and the Aten religions in the expectation of proving their original identity. This, I am aware, will present no easy task. Thanks to the vindictiveness of the priests of Amun we may perhaps know too little of the Aten religion. We only know the Mosaic religion in its final shape, as it was fixed by the Jewish priesthood some eight hundred years later in post-exilic times. If, in spite of this unfavourable state of the material, we find a few indications which favour our hypothesis, we shall be able to set a high value on them.

There would be a short path to proving our thesis that the Mosaic religion was none other than that of the Aten—namely, if we had a confession of faith, a declaration. But I fear we shall be told that this path is closed to us. The Jewish confession of faith, as is well known, runs: 'Schema Jisroel Adonai Elohenu Adonai Echod.' [1] If it is not merely by chance that the name of the Egyptian Aten (or Atum) sounds like the Hebrew word *Adonai* [lord] and the name of the Syrian deity Adonis, but if it is due to a primaeval kinship of speech and meaning, then the Jewish formula might be translated thus: 'Hear, o Israel: our god Aten (Adonai) is a sole god.' Unfortunately I am totally incompetent to answer this question, and I have been able to find but little about it in the literature of the subject.[2] But in all probability this is making things too easy for us. In any case we shall have to come back once more to the problems concerning the name of the god.

The similarities as well as the differences between the two religions are easily discernible without giving us much light. Both of them were forms of a strict monotheism, and we shall be inclined *a priori* to trace back what they had in common to this fundamental characteristic. Jewish monotheism behaved in some respects even more harshly than the Egyptian: for instance

[1] ['Hear, o Israel: the Lord our God is one Lord' (*Deuteronomy*, vi, 4).]

[2] Only a few passages in Weigall (1922, 12 and 19), to the effect that 'the god Atum, the aspect of Ra as the setting sun, was probably of common origin with Aton who was largely worshipped in North Syria', and that a 'foreign queen with her retinue may have therefore felt more sympathy with Heliopolis than with Thebes.' [The connection between Aten and Atum, suggested by Weigall, is not generally accepted by Egyptologists.]

in forbidding pictorial representations of any kind. The most essential difference is to be seen (apart from their gods' names) in the fact that the Jewish religion was entirely without sun-worship, in which the Egyptian one still found support. When we were making the comparison with the popular religion of Egypt, we had an impression that, apart from the fundamental contrast, a factor of *intentional* contradiction played a part in the difference between the two religions. This impression seems to be justified if now, in making the comparison, we replace the Jewish religion by the Aten religion which, as we know, was developed by Akhenaten in deliberate hostility to the popular one. We were rightly surprised to find that the Jewish religion would have nothing to do with the next world or a life after death, though a doctrine of that kind would have been compatible with the strictest monotheism. But this surprise vanishes if we turn back from the Jewish to the Aten religion and suppose that this refusal was taken over from it, since for Akhenaten it was a necessity in his fight against the popular religion, in which Osiris, the god of the dead, played a greater part, perhaps, than any god in the upper world. The agreement between the Jewish and the Aten religions on this important point is the first strong argument in favour of our thesis. We shall learn that it is not the only one.

Moses did not only give the Jews a new religion; it can be stated with equal certainty that he introduced the custom of circumcision to them. This fact is of decisive importance for our problem and has scarcely ever been considered. It is true that the Biblical account contradicts this more than once. On the one hand it traces circumcision back to the patriarchal age as a mark of a covenant between God and Abraham; on the other hand it describes in a quite particularly obscure passage how God was angry with Moses for having neglected a custom which had become holy,[1] and sought to kill him; but that his wife, a Midianite, saved her husband from God's wrath by quickly performing the operation.[2] These, however, are distortions, which should not lead us astray; later on we shall discover the reason for them. The fact remains that there is only one answer to the question of where the Jews derived the custom of cir-

[1] '*Heilig*.' [Cf. p. 120.]

[2] [*Genesis*, xvii, 9 ff. and *Exodus*, iv, 24 ff. Cf. the explanation of the episode on p. 44 below.]

cumcision from—namely, from Egypt. Herodotus, the 'father of history', tells us that the custom of circumcision had long been indigenous in Egypt,[1] and his statements are confirmed by the findings in mummies and indeed by pictures on the walls of tombs. No other people of the Eastern Mediterranean, so far as we know, practised this custom; it may safely be presumed that the Semites, Babylonians and Sumerians were uncircumcised. The Bible story itself says this is so of the inhabitants of Canaan; it is a necessary premiss to the adventure of Jacob's daughter and the prince of Shechem.[2] The possibility that the Jews acquired the custom of circumcision during their sojourn in Egypt in some way other than in connection with the religious teaching of Moses may be rejected as completely without foundation. Now, taking it as certain that circumcision was a universal popular custom in Egypt, let us for a moment adopt the ordinary hypothesis that Moses was a Jew, who sought to free his compatriots from bondage in Egypt and lead them to develop an independent and self-conscious national existence in another country—which was what in fact happened. What sense could it have, in that case, that he should at the same time impose on them a troublesome custom which even, to some extent, made them into Egyptians and which must keep permanently alive their memory of Egypt—whereas his efforts could only be aimed in the opposite direction, towards alienating his people from the land of their bondage and overcoming their longing for the 'flesh-pots of Egypt'? No, the fact from which we started and the hypothesis which we added to it are so incompatible with each other that we may be bold enough to reach this conclusion: if Moses gave the Jews not only a new religion but also the commandment for circumcision, he

[1] [Herodotus, *History*, Book II, Chapter 104.]

[2] [*Genesis*, xxxiv.] I am very well aware that in dealing so autocratically and arbitrarily with Biblical tradition—bringing it up to confirm my views when it suits me and unhesitatingly rejecting it when it contradicts me—I am exposing myself to serious methodological criticism and weakening the convincing force of my arguments. But this is the only way in which one can treat material of which one knows definitely that its trustworthiness has been severely impaired by the distorting influence of tendentious purposes. It is to be hoped that I shall find some degree of justification later on, when I come upon the track of these secret motives. Certainty is in any case unattainable and moreover it may be said that every other writer on the subject has adopted the same procedure.

was not a Jew but an Egyptian, and in that case the Mosaic religion was probably an Egyptian one and, in view of its contrast to the popular religion, the religion of the Aten, with which the later Jewish religion agrees in some remarkable respects.

I have pointed out that my hypothesis that Moses was not a Jew but an Egyptian created a fresh riddle. His course of conduct, which seemed easily intelligible in a Jew, was ununderstandable in an Egyptian. If, however, we place Moses in the time of Akhenaten and suppose him in contact with that Pharaoh, the riddle vanishes and the possibility is revealed of motives which will answer all our questions. Let us start from the assumption that Moses was an aristocratic and prominent man, perhaps in fact a member of the royal house, as the legend says of him. He was undoubtedly aware of his great capacities, ambitious and energetic; he may even have played with the notion of one day being the leader of his people, of becoming the kingdom's ruler. Being close to the Pharaoh, he was a convinced adherent of the new religion, whose basic thoughts he had made his own. When the king died and the reaction set in, he saw all his hopes and prospects destroyed; if he was not prepared to abjure all the convictions that were so dear to him, Egypt had nothing more to offer him — he had lost his country. In this predicament he found an unusual solution. Akhenaten the dreamer had alienated his people and let his empire fall to pieces. The more energetic nature of Moses was more at home with the plan of founding a new kingdom, of finding a new people to whom he would present for their worship the religion which Egypt had disdained. It was, we can see, a heroic attempt to combat destiny, to compensate in two directions for the losses in which Akhenaten's catastrophe had involved him. Perhaps he was at that time Governor of the frontier province (Goshen) in which certain Semitic tribes had settled (perhaps as early as in the Hyksos period[1]). These he chose to be his new people — a historic decision.[2] He came to an agreement with them, put

[1] [A disordered period some 200 years before the time of Akhenaten, when a Semitic people (the so-called 'Shepherd Kings') ruled Northern Egypt.]

[2] If Moses was a high official, this makes it easier to understand the role of leader which he assumed with the Jews; if he was a priest, then it was natural for him to emerge as the founder of a religion. In both these cases he would have been continuing his former profession. A

himself at their head and carried the Exodus through 'by strength of hand'.[1] In complete contrast to the Biblical tradition, we may presume that this Exodus took place peacefully and unpursued. The authority of Moses made this possible and at that time there was no central administration which might have interfered with it.

According to this construction of ours, the Exodus from Egypt would have occurred during the period between 1358 and 1350 B.C.—that is, after Akhenaten's death and before Haremhab's re-establishment of state authority.[2] The goal of the migration could only have been the land of Canaan. After the collapse of the Egyptian domination, hordes of warlike Aramaeans had irrupted into that region, conquering and plundering, and had shown in that way where a capable people might win fresh land for themselves. We learn of these warriors from the letters found in 1887 in the ruined city of Amarna. There they are called 'Habiru', and the name was transferred (we do not know how) to the later Jewish invaders 'Hebrews' who cannot be intended in the Amarna letters. South of Palestine, too, in Canaan, there lived the tribes which were the nearest relatives of the Jews who were now making their way out of Egypt.

The motives which we have discovered for the Exodus as a whole apply also to the introduction of circumcision. We are familiar with the attitude adopted by people (both nations and individuals) to this primaeval usage, which is scarcely understood any longer. Those who do not practise it look on it as very strange and are a little horrified by it, but those who have adopted circumcision are proud of it. They feel exalted by it,

prince of the royal house might easily have been both a provincial governor and a priest. In the account given by Flavius Josephus in his *Jewish Antiquities*, who accepts the exposure legend but seems to be in touch with traditions other than the Biblical one, Moses, as an Egyptian general, fought a victorious campaign in Ethiopia. [English translation, 1930, 269 ff.]

[1] [*Exodus*, xiii, 3, 14 and 16.]

[2] This would make the Exodus about a century earlier than is supposed by most historians, who put it in the Nineteenth Dynasty under Merenptah [sometimes transliterated 'Meneptah'] Or it may have happened a little later [than is suggested in the text above], for the official [Egyptian] histories seem to have included the interregnum in the reign of Haremhab. [See below, p. 48.]

ennobled, as it were, and look down with contempt on the others, whom they regard as unclean. Even to this day a Turk will abuse a Christian as an 'uncircumcised dog'. It may be supposed that Moses, who, being an Egyptian, was himself circumcised, shared this attitude. The Jews with whom he departed from his country were to serve him as a superior substitute for the Egyptians he had left behind. On no account must the Jews be inferior to them. He wished to make them into a 'holy nation', as is expressly stated in the Biblical text,[1] and as a mark of this consecration he introduced among them too the custom which made them at least the equals of the Egyptians. And he could only welcome it if they were to be isolated by such a sign and kept apart from the foreign peoples among whom their wanderings would lead them, just as the Egyptians themselves had kept apart from all foreigners.[2]

Later on, however, Jewish tradition behaved as though it were put at a disadvantage by the inference we have been drawing. If it were to be admitted that circumcision was an Egyptian custom introduced by Moses, that would be almost as much as to recognize that the religion delivered to them by Moses was an Egyptian one too. There were good reasons for denying that fact, so the truth about circumcision must also be contradicted.

[1] [*Exodus*, xix, 6. The same word is used in this connection elsewhere in the Authorized Version, e.g. *Deuteronomy*, vii, 6. Cf. p. 120.]

[2] Herodotus, who visited Egypt about 450 B.C., enumerates in his account of his journey characteristics of the Egyptian people which exhibit an astonishing similarity to traits familiar to us in later Jewry. 'They are altogether more religious in every respect than any other people, and differ from them too in a number of their customs. Thus they practise circumcision, which they were the first to introduce, and on grounds of cleanliness. Further they have a horror of pigs, which is no doubt related to the fact that Seth in the form of a black pig wounded Horus. And lastly and most markedly, they hold cows in the greatest honour, and would never eat or sacrifice them, because this would offend Isis with her cow's horns. For that reason no Egyptian man or woman would ever kiss a Greek or use his knife or his spit or his cauldron or eat the flesh of an otherwise clean ox if it had been cut with a Greek knife . . . They look down in narrow-minded pride on other people, who are unclean and are not so close to the gods as they are.' Erman, 1905, 18.] [This is a summary by Erman of Chapters 36 to 47 of Book II of Herodotus.] We must not, of course, overlook parallels to this in the life of the Indian people. And, incidentally, who suggested to the Jewish poet Heine in the nineteenth century A.D. that he should complain

(4)

At this point I expect to be met by an objection to my hypothesis. This placed Moses, an Egyptian, in the Akhenaten period. It derived his decision to take over the Jewish people from the political circumstances in the country at that time, and it recognized the religion that he presented to or imposed on his *protegés* as the Aten religion, which had actually collapsed in Egypt itself. I expect to be told that I have brought forward this structure of conjectures with too much positiveness, for which there is no basis in the material. This objection is, I think, unjustified. I have already laid stress on the factor of doubt in my introductory remarks; I have, as it were, placed that factor outside the brackets and I may be allowed to save myself the trouble of repeating it in connection with each item *inside* them.[1]

I may continue the discussion with a few critical remarks of my own. The kernel of my hypothesis the dependence of Jewish monotheism on the monotheist episode in Egyptian history—has been suspected and mentioned by various writers. I spare myself the trouble of quoting these opinions here, since none of them is able to indicate how this influence can have come into operation. Even though in our view that influence remains linked to the figure of Moses, we ought also to mention some other possibilities in addition to the one we prefer. It must not be supposed that the fall of the official Aten religion brought the monotheist current in Egypt to a complete stop. The priesthood at On, from which it started, survived the catastrophe and may have continued to bring under the sway of its trend of ideas generations after Akhenaten's. Thus the action taken by Moses is still conceivable even if he did not live at the time of Akhenaten and did not fall under his personal influence, if he was only an adherent or perhaps a member of the priesthood of On. This possibility would postpone the date of the Exodus and bring it closer to the date which is usually adopted (in the thirteenth century); but it has nothing else to recommend it. Our insight into the motives of Moses would be lost and the facilitation of the Exodus by the prevailing anarchy in the

of his religion as 'the plague dragged along from the Nile valley, the unhealthy beliefs of Ancient Egypt'? [From a poem on 'The New Jewish Hospital in Hamburg', *Zeitgedichte*, XI]

[1] [This, of course, is a simile from algebra.]

country would no longer apply. The succeeding kings of the Nineteenth Dynasty established a strong *régime*. It was only during the period immediately after the heretic king's death that there was a convergence of all the conditions, external and internal alike, that were favourable to the Exodus.

The Jews possess a copious literature apart from the Bible, in which the legends and myths are to be found which grew up in the course of centuries round the imposing figure of their first leader and the founder of their religion, and which have both illuminated and obscured it. Scattered in this material there may be fragments of trustworthy tradition for which no room was found in the Pentateuch. A legend of this sort gives an engaging account of how the ambition of the man Moses found expression even in his childhood. Once when Pharaoh had taken him in his arms and playfully lifted him high in the air, the little three-year-old boy snatched the crown from the king's head and put it on his own. This portent alarmed the king, who did not fail to consult his wise men about it.[1] There are stories elsewhere of his victorious military actions as an Egyptian general in Ethiopia, and, in this connection, how he fled from Egypt because he had reason to be afraid of the envy of a party at Court or of Pharaoh himself. The Biblical account itself attributes some features to Moses to which credence may well be given. It describes him as being of an irascible nature, flaring up easily, as when, in indignation, he slew the brutal overseer who was ill-treating a Jewish workman, or when in his anger at the people's apostasy he broke the Tables of the Law which he had brought down from the Mount of God [Sinai];[2] indeed God himself punished him in the end for an impatient deed, but we are not told what it was.[3] Since a trait of this kind is not one that would serve for his glorification, it may perhaps correspond to a historical truth. Nor can the possibility be excluded that some of the character traits which the Jews included in their early picture of their God describing

[1] This anecdote, in a slightly different form, also appears in Josephus. [*Jewish Antiquities*. English translation, 1930, 265 f.]

[2] [*Exodus*, ii, 11 12; xxxii, 19.]

[3] [If this is a reference to Moses, at the end of his life, not being allowed to enter the Promised Land (*Deuteronomy*, xxxiv, 4), the explanation was in fact that he had shown impatience by striking the rock with his rod to draw water instead of merely speaking to it (*Numbers*, xx, 11 12.)]

him as jealous, severe and ruthless may have been at bottom derived from a recollection of Moses; for in fact it was not an invisible God but the man Moses who brought them out of Egypt.

Another trait attributed to Moses has a special claim to our interest. Moses is said to have been 'slow of speech': he must have suffered from an inhibition or disorder of speech. Consequently, in his supposed dealings with Pharaoh, he needed the support of Aaron, who is called his brother.[1] This again may be a historical truth and would make a welcome contribution to presenting a lively picture of the great man. But it may also have another and more important significance. It may recall, slightly distorted, the fact that Moses spoke another language and could not communicate with his Semitic neo-Egyptians without an interpreter, at all events at the beginning of their relations—a fresh confirmation, then, of the thesis that Moses was an Egyptian.

Now, however, or so it seems, our work has reached a provisional end. For the moment we can draw no further conclusions from our hypothesis that Moses was an Egyptian, whether it has been proved or not. No historian can regard the Biblical account of Moses and the Exodus as anything other than a pious piece of imaginative fiction, which has recast a remote tradition for the benefit of its own tendentious purposes. The original form of that tradition is unknown to us; we should be glad to discover what the distorting purposes were, but we are kept in the dark by our ignorance of the historical events. The fact that our reconstruction leaves no room for a number of show-pieces in the Bible story, such as the ten plagues, the passage of the Red Sea and the solemn law-giving on Mount Sinai this does not disconcert us. But we cannot treat it as a matter of indifference if we find ourselves in contradiction to the findings of the sober historical researches of the present day.

These modern historians, of whom we may take Eduard Meyer (1906) as a representative, agree with the Bible story on one decisive point. They too are of opinion that the Jewish tribes, which later developed into the people of Israel, took on a new religion at a certain point of time. But in their view this did not take place in Egypt or at the foot of a mountain in the

[1] [*Exodus*, iv, 10 and 14.]

Sinai Peninsula, but in a certain locality known as Meribah-Kadesh,[1] an oasis distinguished by its wealth of springs and wells in the stretch of country south of Palestine, between the eastern exit from the Sinai Peninsula and the western border of Arabia.[2] There they took over the worship of a god Yahweh,[3] probably from the neighbouring Arabian tribe of Midianites. It seems likely that other tribes in the vicinity were also followers of this god.

Yahweh was unquestionably a volcano god. Now, as is well known, Egypt is without volcanoes and the mountains of the Sinai Peninsula have never been volcanic; on the other hand, there are volcanoes which may have been active till recent times along the western border of Arabia. So one of these mountains must have been the Sinai-Horeb which was regarded as the home of Yahweh.[4] In spite of all the revisions to which the Biblical story was subjected, the original picture of the god's character can, according to Eduard Meyer, be reconstructed: he was an uncanny, bloodthirsty demon who went about by night and shunned the light of day.[5]

The mediator between God and the people in the founding of this religion was named Moses. He was the son-in-law of the Midianite priest Jethro, and was keeping his flocks when he received the summons from God. He was also visited by Jethro at Kadesh and given some advice by him.[6]

Though Eduard Meyer says, it is true, that he never doubted that there was some historical core in the story of the sojourn in Egypt and the catastrophe to the Egyptians,[7] he evidently does not know how to place and what use to make of this fact

[1] [Throughout this work Freud uses the more technical phonetic spelling of the latter part of this name: Qadeš. We have adopted the ordinary English version.]

[2] [Its precise position seems uncertain, but it was probably in what is now known as the Negev, on about the same latitude as Petra but some fifty miles further to the West. It is not to be confused with the better-known Kadesh in Syria, to the north of Palestine, which was the scene of a much boasted victory by Ramesses II over the Hittites.]

[3] [This is the usual English spelling. Freud uses the corresponding German one: 'Jahve'.]

[4] At a few places in the Biblical text it is still stated that Yahweh came down from Sinai to Meribah-Kadesh. [E.g. *Numbers*, xx, 6–9. Sinai and Horeb are usually taken as different names of the same mountain.]

[5] Meyer, 1906, 38 and 58.

[6] [*Exodus*, iii, 1 and xviii, 2–27.] [7] Meyer, 1906, 49.

which he recognizes. The only thing he is prepared to derive from Egypt is the custom of circumcision. He adds two important indications which go to confirm our previous arguments: first, that Joshua ordered the people to be circumcised in order to 'roll away the reproach [i.e. contempt] of Egypt from off you',[1] and secondly a quotation from Herodotus saying that 'the Phoenicians (no doubt the Jews) and the Syrians of Palestine themselves admit that they learnt the custom of the Egyptians'.[2] But he has little to say in favour of an Egyptian Moses: 'The Moses we know is the ancestor of the priests of Kadesh—that is, a figure from a genealogical legend, standing in relation to a cult, and not a historical personality. Thus (apart from those who accept tradition root and branch as historical truth) no one who treats him as a historical figure has been able to give any content to him, to represent him as a concrete individual or to point out what he may have done and what his historical work may have been.' [3]

On the other hand, Meyer is never tired of insisting on the relation of Moses to Kadesh and Midian: 'The figure of Moses, which is intimately bound up with Midian and the cult-centres in the desert. . . .' [4] and: 'This figure of Moses, then, is inseparably linked with Kadesh (Massah and Meribah[5]) and this is supplemented by his being the son-in-law of the Midianite priest. His link with the Exodus, on the contrary, and the whole story of his youth are entirely secondary and simply the consequence of the interpolation of Moses into a connected and continuous legendary story.'[6] Meyer also points out that the themes included in the story of the youth of Moses were one and all dropped later: 'Moses in Midian is no longer an Egyptian and grandson of Pharaoh, but a shepherd to whom Yahweh revealed himself. In telling of the plagues there is no longer any talk of his former connections, though effective use might easily have been made of them, and the command to kill the [new-born] sons of the Israelites[7] is completely forgotten. In the Exodus and the destruction of the Egyptians

[1] [*Joshua*, v, 9.]

[2] Meyer, 1906, 449. [Quoted from Herodotus, *History*, Book II, Chapter 104.]

[3] Meyer, 1906, 451 [footnote]. [4] Meyer, 1906, 49.

[5] [These seem to be the names of springs at Kadesh. Cf. *Exodus*, xvii, 7.]

[6] Meyer, 1906, 72. [7] [*Exodus*, i, 16 and 22.]

Moses plays no part whatever: he is not even mentioned. The heroic character which the legend of his childhood presupposes is totally absent from the later Moses; he is only the man of God, a miracle-worker equipped by Yahweh with supernatural powers.' [1]

We cannot dispute the impression that this Moses of Kadesh and Midian, to whom tradition could actually attribute the erection of a brazen serpent as a god of healing,[2] is someone quite other than the aristocratic Egyptian inferred by us, who presented the people with a religion in which all magic and spells were proscribed in the strictest terms. Our Egyptian Moses is no less different, perhaps, from the Midianite Moses than is the universal god Aten from the demon Yahweh in his home on the Mount of God. And if we have any faith at all in the pronouncements of the recent historians, we shall have to admit that the thread which we have tried to spin from our hypothesis that Moses was an Egyptian has broken for the second time. And this time, as it seems, with no hope of mending.

(5)

Unexpectedly, here once more a way of escape presents itself. Efforts to see in Moses a figure that goes beyond the priest of Kadesh, and to confirm the grandeur with which tradition glorifies him, have not ceased even since Eduard Meyer. (Cf. Gressmann [1913] and others.) Then, in 1922, Ernst Sellin made a discovery which affected our problem decisively. He found in the Prophet Hosea (in the second half of the eighth century B.C.) unmistakable signs of a tradition to the effect that Moses, the founder of their religion, met with a violent end in a rising of his refractory and stiff-necked people, and that at the same time the religion he had introduced was thrown off. This tradition is not, however, restricted to Hosea; it reappears in most of the later Prophets, and indeed, according to Sellin, became the basis of all the later Messianic expectations. At the end of the Babylonian captivity a hope grew up among the Jewish people that the man who had been so shamefully murdered would return from the dead and would lead his remorseful people, and perhaps not them alone, into the kingdom of lasting bliss. The obvious connection of this with the

[1] Meyer, 1906, 47. [2] [*Numbers*, xxi, 9.]

destiny of the founder of a later religion does not concern us here.

Once again I am not, of course, in a position to judge whether Sellin has interpreted the passages from the Prophets correctly. But if he is right we may attribute historical credibility to the tradition he has recognized, for such things are not readily invented. There is no tangible motive for doing so; but if they have really happened, it is easy to understand that people will be anxious to forget them. We need not accept all the details of the tradition. In Sellin's opinion Shittim, in the country east of the Jordan, is to be regarded as the scene of the attack on Moses. But we shall soon see that that region is not acceptable for our notions.

We will borrow from Sellin his hypothesis that the Egyptian Moses was murdered by the Jews and the religion he had introduced abandoned. This allows us to spin our threads further without contradicting the authentic findings of historical research. But apart from this we shall venture to maintain independence of the authorities and to 'proceed along our own track'. The Exodus from Egypt remains our starting-point. A considerable number of people must have left the country with Moses; a small collection would not have seemed worth while to this ambitious man with his large aims in view. The immigrants had probably been living in Egypt long enough to have grown into quite a large population. But we shall certainly not be going wrong if we assume, with the majority of the authorities, that only a fraction of what was later to be the Jewish people had experienced the events in Egypt. In other words, the tribe that returned from Egypt joined up later, in the stretch of country between Egypt and Canaan, with other kindred tribes, which had been settled there for a considerable time. This union, from which sprang the people of Israel, found expression in the adoption of a new religion, common to all the tribes, the religion of Yahweh—an event which, according to Eduard Meyer [1906, 60 ff.], took place under Midianite influence at Kadesh. Thereafter, the people felt strong enough to undertake their invasion of the land of Canaan. It would not tally with this course of events to suppose that the catastrophe to Moses and his religion occurred in the country east of the Jordan; it must have happened long before the union of the tribes.

There can be no doubt that very different elements came together in the construction of the Jewish people, but what must have made the greatest difference among these tribes was whether they had experienced or not the sojourn in Egypt and what followed it. Having regard to this point, we may say that the nation arose out of a union of two component parts; and it fits in with this that, after a short period of political unity, it split into two pieces –the kingdom of Israel and the kingdom of Judah. History is fond of reinstatements like this, where a later fusion is undone and an earlier separation re-emerges. The most impressive example of this was afforded, as is well known, by the Reformation, which, after an interval of over a thousand years, brought to light once more the frontier between the Germany which had at one time been Roman and the Germany which had remained independent. In the instance of the Jewish people it is not possible to point to such a faithful reproduction of the old state of things; our knowledge of those times is too uncertain to allow us to assert that the settled tribes were once more to be found together in the Northern Kingdom and those who had returned from Egypt in the Southern Kingdom; but here too the later split cannot have been unrelated to the earlier joining up. The former Egyptians were probably fewer in numbers than the others, but showed themselves culturally the stronger. They exercised a more powerful influence on the further evolution of the people, because they brought along with them a tradition which the others lacked.

Perhaps they brought something else with them more tangible than a tradition. One of the greatest enigmas of Jewish prehistory is that of the origin of the Levites. They are traced back to one of the twelve tribes of Israel—that of Levi but no tradition has ventured to say where that tribe was originally located or what portion of the conquered land of Canaan was allotted to it. They filled the most important priestly offices, but they were distinct from the priests. A Levite is not necessarily a priest; nor is it the name of a caste. Our hypothesis about the figure of Moses suggests an explanation. It is incredible that a great lord, like Moses the Egyptian, should have joined this alien people unaccompanied. He certainly must have brought a retinue with him his closest followers, his scribes, his domestic servants. This is who the Levites originally were. The tradition which alleges that Moses was a Levite seems to be a

clear distortion of the fact: the Levites were the followers of Moses. This solution is supported by the fact which I have already mentioned in my earlier essay that it is only among the Levites that Egyptian names occur later.[1] It is to be presumed that a fair number of these followers of Moses escaped the catastrophe which descended on him himself and the religion he founded. They multiplied in the course of the next generations, became fused with the people they lived among, but remained loyal to their master, preserved his memory and carried out the tradition of his doctrines. At the time of the union with the disciples of Yahweh they formed an influential minority, culturally superior to the rest.

I put it forward as a provisional hypothesis that between the fall of Moses and the establishment of the new religion at Kadesh two generations, or perhaps even a century, elapsed. I see no means of deciding whether the Neo-Egyptians (as I should like to call them here)—that is, those who returned from Egypt—met their tribal kinsmen after the latter had already adopted the Yahweh religion or earlier. The second possibility might seem the more probable. But there would be no difference in the outcome. What happened at Kadesh was a compromise, in which the share taken by the tribes of Moses is unmistakable.

Here we may once again call on the evidence afforded by circumcision, which has repeatedly been of help to us, like, as it were, a key-fossil. This custom became obligatory in the Yahweh religion as well and, since it was indissolubly linked with Egypt, its adoption can only have been a concession to the followers of Moses, who—or the Levites among them—would not renounce this mark of their holiness. [P. 30.] So much of their old religion they wished to rescue, and in return for it they were prepared to accept the new deity and what the priests of Midian told them about it. They may possibly have gained yet other concessions. We have already mentioned that Jewish ritual prescribed certain restrictions on the use of God's name. Instead of 'Yahweh' the word 'Adonai [Lord]' must be spoken. It is tempting to bring this prescription into our context, but

[1] [This earlier mention is not to be found. It was no doubt dropped in the course of Freud's revisions of the book. See, however, an Editor's addition to a footnote on p. 15.] My hypothesis fits in well with Yahuda's statements on the Egyptian influence on early Jewish literature. See Yahuda, 1929.

that is only a conjecture without any other basis. The prohibition upon a god's name is, as is well known, a taboo of primaeval age. We do not understand why it was revived precisely in the Jewish Law, it is not impossible that this happened under the influence of a fresh motive. There is no need to suppose that the prohibition was carried through consistently; in the construction of theophorous personal names – that is, in compounds – the name of the God Yahweh might be freely used (e.g. Jochanan, Jehu, Joshua). There were, however, special circumstances connected with this name. As we know, critical Biblical research supposes that the Hexateuch has two documentary sources.[1] These are distinguished as J and E, because one of them uses 'Jahve [Yahweh]' as the name of God and the other 'Elohim': 'Elohim', to be sure, not 'Adonai'. But we may bear in mind a remark by one of our authorities: 'The different names are a clear indication of two originally different gods.' [2]

We brought up the retention of circumcision as evidence for the fact that the founding of the religion at Kadesh involved a compromise. We can see its nature from the concordant accounts given by J and E, which thus go back on this point to a common source (a documentary or oral tradition). Its leading purpose was to demonstrate the greatness and power of the new god Yahweh. Since the followers of Moses attached so much value to their experience of the Exodus from Egypt, this act of liberation had to be represented as due to Yahweh, and the event was provided with embellishments which gave proof of the terrifying grandeur of the volcano god – such as the pillar of smoke [cloud] which changed at night into a pillar of fire and the storm which laid bare the bed of the sea for a while, so that the pursuers were drowned by the returning waters.[3] This account brought the Exodus and the founding of the religion close together, and disavowed the long interval between them. So, too, the law-giving was represented as occurring not at Kadesh but at the foot of the Mount of God, marked by a volcanic eruption. This account, however, did grave injustice to the memory of the man Moses; it was he and not the volcano god who had liberated the people from Egypt. So a compensation was owing to him, and it consisted in the man Moses being transferred to Kadesh or to Sinai-Horeb and put in the place of

[1] [This is elaborated on p. 42 below.]

[2] Gressmann, 1913, 54. [3] [*Exodus*, xiii, 21 and xiv, 21–8.]

the Midianite priests. We shall find later that this solution satisfied another imperatively pressing purpose. In this manner a mutual agreement, as it were, was arrived at: Yahweh, who lived on a mountain in Midian, was allowed to extend over into Egypt, and, in exchange for this, the existence and activity of Moses were extended to Kadesh and as far as the country east of the Jordan. Thus he was fused with the figure of the later religious founder, the son-in-law of the Midianite Jethro [p. 35], and lent him his name of Moses. Of this second Moses, however, we can give no personal account—so completely was he eclipsed by the first, the Egyptian Moses—unless we pick out the contradictions in the Biblical description of the character of Moses. He is often pictured as domineering, hot-tempered and even violent, yet he is also described as the mildest and most patient of men.[1] These last qualities would evidently have fitted in badly with the Egyptian Moses, who had to deal with his people in such great and difficult matters; they may have belonged to the character of the other Moses, the Midianite. We are, I think, justified in separating the two figures and in assuming that the Egyptian Moses was never at Kadesh and had never heard the name of Yahweh, and that the Midianite Moses had never been in Egypt and knew nothing of Aten. In order to solder the two figures together, tradition or legend had the task of bringing the Egyptian Moses to Midian, and we have seen that more than one explanation of this was current.

(6)

Once again I am prepared to find myself blamed for having presented my reconstruction of the early history of the people of Israel with too great and unjustified certainty. I shall not feel very severely hit by this criticism, since it finds an echo in my own judgement. I know myself that my structure has its weak spots, but it has its strong points too. On the whole my predominant impression is that it is worth while to pursue the work in the direction it has taken.

The Bible narrative that we have before us contains precious and, indeed, invaluable historical data, which, however, have been distorted by the influence of powerful tendentious purposes and embellished by the products of poetic invention. In the

[1] [See, for instance, *Exodus*, xxxii, 19 and *Numbers*, xii, 3.]

course of our efforts so far, we have been able to detect one of these distorting purposes [p. 40]. That discovery points our further path. We must uncover other similar tendentious purposes. If we find means of recognizing the distortions produced by those purposes, we shall bring to light fresh fragments of the true state of things lying behind them.

And we will begin by listening to what critical Biblical research is able to tell us about the history of the origin of the Hexateuch, the five books of Moses and the book of Joshua, which alone concern us here.[1] The earliest documentary source is accepted as J (the Yahwistic writer), who in the most recent times has been identified as the priest Ebyatar, a contemporary of King David.[2] Somewhat it is not known how much later we come to the so-called Elohistic writer [E], who belonged to the Northern Kingdom.[3] After the collapse of the Northern Kingdom in 722 B.C., a Jewish priest combined portions of J and E and made some additions of his own. His compilation is designated as JE. In the seventh century *Deuteronomy*, the fifth book, was added to this. It is supposed to have been found complete in the Temple. In the period after the destruction of the Temple (586 B.C.), during and after the Exile, the revision known as the 'Priestly Code' was compiled; and in the fifth century the work was given its final revision and since then has not been changed in its essentials.[4]

The history of King David and of his period is most probably the work of a contemporary. It is genuine historical writing,

[1] *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, Eleventh Edition, Vol. III, 1910. Article 'Bible'.

[2] See Auerbach (1932).

[3] The Yahwistic and Elohistic writings were first distinguished by Astruc in 1753. [Jean Astruc (1684–1766) was a French physician attached to the Court of Louis XV.]

[4] It is historically certain that the Jewish type was finally fixed as a result of the reforms of Ezra and Nehemiah in the fifth century before Christ—that is, after the Exile, under the Persian domination which was friendly to the Jews. On our reckoning, some nine hundred years had passed since the emergence of Moses. These reforms took seriously the regulations that aimed at making the entire people holy, their separation from their neighbours was made effective by the prohibition of mixed marriages; the Pentateuch, the true book of the laws, was given its final form and the revision known as the Priestly Code brought to completion. It seems certain, however, that these reforms introduced no fresh tendentious purposes, but took up and strengthened earlier trends.

five hundred years before Herodotus, the 'father of History'. It becomes easier to understand this achievement if, on the lines of our hypothesis, we think of Egyptian influence.[1] A suspicion even arises that the Israelites of that earliest period -that is to say, the scribes of Moses—may have had some share in the invention of the first alphabet.[2] It is, of course, beyond our knowledge to discover how far reports about former times go back to early records or to oral tradition and how long an interval of time there was in individual instances between an event and its recording. The text, however, as we possess it to-day, will tell us enough about its own vicissitudes. Two mutually opposed treatments have left their traces on it. On the one hand it has been subjected to revisions which have falsified it in the sense of their secret aims, have mutilated and amplified it and have even changed it into its reverse; on the other hand a solicitous piety has presided over it and has sought to preserve everything as it was, no matter whether it was consistent or contradicted itself. Thus almost everywhere noticeable gaps, disturbing repetitions and obvious contradictions have come about—indications which reveal things to us which it was not intended to communicate. In its implications the distortion of a text resembles a murder: the difficulty is not in perpetrating the deed, but in getting rid of its traces. We might well lend the word '*Entstellung* [distortion]' the double meaning to which it has a claim but of which to-day it makes no use. It should mean not only 'to change the appearance of something' but also 'to put something in another place, to displace'.[3] Accordingly, in many instances of textual distortion, we may nevertheless count upon finding what has been suppressed and disavowed hidden away somewhere else, though changed and torn from its context. Only it will not always be easy to recognize it.

The distorting purposes which we are anxious to lay hold of must have been at work already on the traditions before any of them were committed to writing. We have already discovered

[1] Cf. Yahuda, 1929.

[2] If they were subject to the prohibition against pictures they would even have had a motive for abandoning the hieroglyphic picture-writing while adapting its written characters to expressing a new language. (Cf. Auerbach, 1932.) [Hieroglyphic writing included both signs depicting objects and signs representing sounds.]

[3] ['*Stelle*' means 'a place', and '*ent-*' is a prefix indicating a change of condition.]

one of them, perhaps the most powerful of all. As we have said, with the setting-up of the new god, Yahweh, at Kadesh, it became necessary to do something to glorify him. It would be more correct to say: it became necessary to fit him in, to make room for him, to wipe out the traces of earlier religions. This seems to have been achieved with complete success as regards the religion of the resident tribes. we hear nothing more of it. With those returning from Egypt it was not such an easy matter; they would not let themselves be deprived of the Exodus, the man Moses or circumcision. It is true that they had been in Egypt, but they had left it, and thenceforward every trace of Egyptian influence was to be disavowed. The man Moses was dealt with by shifting him to Midian and Kadesh, and by fusing him with the priest of Yahweh who founded the religion. Circumcision, the most suspicious indication of dependence on Egypt, had to be retained but no attempts were spared to detach the custom from Egypt—all evidence to the contrary. It is only as a deliberate denial of the betraying fact that we can explain the puzzling and incomprehensibly worded passage in *Exodus* [iv, 24–6], according to which on one occasion Yahweh was angry with Moses because he had neglected circumcision, and his Midianite wife saved his life by quickly carrying out the operation.[1] We shall presently come across another invention for making the uncomfortable piece of evidence harmless.

The fact that we find signs of efforts being made to deny explicitly that Yahweh was a new god, alien to the Jews, can scarcely be described as the appearance of a fresh tendentious purpose: it is rather a continuation of the former one. With this end in view the legends of the patriarchs of the people—Abraham, Isaac and Jacob—were introduced. Yahweh asserted that he was already the god of these forefathers; though it is true that he himself had to admit that they had not worshipped him under that name.[2] He does not add, however, what the other name was.

And here was the opportunity for a decisive blow against the Egyptian origin of the custom of circumcision: Yahweh, it was said, had already insisted on it with Abraham and had

[1] [Cf. p. 26.]

[2] [Cf. *Exodus*, vi, 3.] This does not make the restrictions upon the use of this new name more intelligible, though it does make them more suspect.

introduced it as the token of the covenant between him and Abraham.[1] But this was a particularly clumsy invention. As a mark that is to distinguish one person from others and prefer him to them, one would choose something that is not to be found in other people; one would *not* choose something that can be exhibited in the same way by millions of other people. An Israelite who was transplanted to Egypt would have had to acknowledge every Egyptian as a brother in the covenant, a brother in Yahweh. It is impossible that the Israelites who created the text of the Bible can have been ignorant of the fact that circumcision was indigenous in Egypt. The passage in Joshua [v, 9] quoted by Eduard Meyer [see p. 35 above] admits this without question; but for that very reason it had to be disavowed at any price.

We must not expect the mythical structures of religion to pay too much attention to logical coherence. Otherwise popular feeling might have taken justified offence against a deity who made a covenant with their forefathers with mutual obligations and then, for centuries on end, paid no attention to his human partners, till it suddenly occurred to him to manifest himself anew to their descendants. Even more puzzling is the notion of a god's all at once 'choosing' a people, declaring them to be his people and himself to be their god. I believe this is the only instance of its sort in the history of human religions. Ordinarily god and people are indissolubly linked, they are one from the very beginning of things. No doubt we sometimes hear of a people taking on a different god, but never of a god seeking a different people. We may perhaps understand this unique event better if we recall the relations between Moses and the Jewish people. Moses had stooped to the Jews, had made them his people: they were his 'chosen people'.[2]

[1] [*Genesis*, xvii, 9–14.]

[2] Yahweh was undoubtedly a volcano god. There was no occasion for the inhabitants of Egypt to worship him. I am certainly not the first person to be struck by the resemblance of the sound of the name 'Yahweh' to the root of the other divine name 'Jupiter (Jove)'. [The letter 'j' in German is pronounced like the English 'y'.] The name 'Jochanan' is compounded with an abbreviation of the Hebrew Yahweh in the same kind of way as [the German] 'Gotthold [God is gracious]' and the Carthaginian equivalent 'Hannibal'. This name (Jochanan), in the forms 'Johann', 'John', 'Jean', 'Juan', has become the favourite first name in European Christendom. The Italians, in rendering it

The bringing-in of the patriarchs served yet another purpose. They had lived in Canaan, and their memory was linked with particular localities in that country. It is possible that they were themselves originally Canaanite heroes or local divinities, and were then seized on by the immigrant Israelites for their prehistory. By appealing to the patriarchs they were as it were asserting their indigenous character and defending themselves from the odium attaching to an alien conqueror. It was a clever twist to declare that the god Yahweh was only giving them back what their forefathers had once possessed.

In the later contributions to the text of the Bible the intention was put into effect of avoiding the mention of Kadesh. The place at which the religion was founded was fixed once and for all as the Mount of God, Sinai-Horeb. It is not easy to see the motive for this; perhaps people were unwilling to be reminded of the influence of Midian. But all later distortions, especially of the period of the Priestly Code, had another aim in view. There was no longer any need to alter accounts of events in a desired sense—for this had been done long before. But care was taken to shift back commands and institutions of the present day into early times—to base them, as a rule, on the Mosaic law-giving—so as to derive from this their claim to being holy

'Giovanni' and moreover calling a day of the week 'Giovedì [Thursday]', are bringing to light a resemblance which may possibly mean nothing or possibly a very great deal. At this point, extensive but very uncertain prospects open up before us. It seems that in those obscure centuries which are scarcely accessible to historical research, the countries round the eastern basin of the Mediterranean were the scene of frequent and violent volcanic eruptions, which must have made the strongest impression on their inhabitants. Evans assumes that the final destruction of the palace of Minos at Knossos too was the consequence of an earthquake. In Crete at that period (as probably in the Aegean world in general) the great mother-goddess was worshipped. The realization that she was not able to protect her house against the assaults of a stronger power may have contributed to her having to give place to a male deity, and, if so, the volcano god had the first claim to take her place. After all, Zeus always remains the 'earth-shaker'. There is little doubt that it was during those obscure ages that the mother-goddesses were replaced by male gods (who may originally perhaps have been sons). The destiny of Pallas Athene, who was no doubt the local form of the mother-goddess, is particularly impressive. She was reduced to being a daughter by the religious revolution, she was robbed of her own mother and, by having virginity imposed on her, was permanently excluded from motherhood. [On the mother-goddesses, see below, pp. 83–4.]

and binding. However much the picture of the past might in this way be falsified, the procedure was not without a certain psychological justification. It reflected the fact that in the course of long ages—between the Exodus from Egypt and the fixing of the text of the Bible under Ezra and Nehemiah some eight hundred years elapsed —the Yahweh religion had had its form changed back into conformity, or even perhaps into identity, with the original religion of Moses.

And this is the essential outcome, the momentous substance, of the history of the Jewish religion.

(7)

Of all the events of early times which later poets, priests and historians undertook to work over, one stood out, the suppression of which was enjoined by the most immediate and best human motives. This was the murder of Moses, the great leader and Liberator, which Sellin discovered from hints in the writings of the Prophets. Sellin's hypothesis cannot be called fantastic—it is probable enough. Moses, deriving from the school of Akhenaten, employed no methods other than did the king; he commanded, he forced his faith upon the people.[1] The doctrine of Moses may have been even harsher than that of his master. He had no need to retain the sun-god as a support: the school of On had no significance for his alien people. Moses, like Akhenaten, met with the same fate that awaits all enlightened despots. The Jewish people under Moses were just as little able to tolerate such a highly spiritualized[2] religion and find satisfaction of their needs in what it had to offer as had been the Egyptians of the Eighteenth Dynasty. The same thing happened in both cases: those who had been dominated and kept in want rose and threw off the burden of the religion that had been imposed on them. But while the tame Egyptians waited till fate had removed the sacred figure of their Pharaoh, the savage Semites took fate into their own hands and rid themselves of their tyrant.[3]

[1] At that period any other method of influencing them was scarcely possible.

[2] ['*Vergeistigte*.' See below, Essay III, Part II (C) and p 86, footnote.]

[3] It is really remarkable how little we hear in the thousands of years of Egyptian history of the violent removal or murder of a Pharaoh. A

Nor can it be maintained that the surviving text of the Bible gives us no warning of such an end to Moses. The account of the 'wandering in the wilderness',[1] which may stand for the period during which Moses ruled, describes a succession of serious revolts against his authority which were also, by Yahweh's command, suppressed with bloody punishment. It is easy to imagine that one such rebellion ended in a way different from what the text suggests. The people's defection from the new religion is also described in the text—only as an episode, it is true: namely in the story of the golden calf. In this, by an ingenious turn, the breaking of the tables of the law (which is to be understood symbolically: 'he has broken the law') is transposed on to Moses himself, and his furious indignation is assigned as its motive.[2]

There came a time when people began to regret the murder of Moses and to seek to forget it. This was certainly so at the time of the union of the two portions of the people at Kadesh. But when the Exodus and the foundation of the religion at the oasis [of Kadesh] were brought closer together [p. 40], and Moses was represented as being concerned in the latter instead of the other man [the Midianite priest], not only were the demands of the followers of Moses satisfied but the distressing fact of his violent end was successfully disavowed. In actual fact it is most unlikely that Moses could have taken part in the proceedings at Kadesh even if his life had not been cut short.

We must now make an attempt at elucidating the chronological relations of these events. We have put the Exodus in the period after the end of the Eighteenth Dynasty (1350 B.C.). It may have occurred then or a little later, since the Egyptian chroniclers have included the succeeding years of anarchy in the reign of Haremhab, which brought them to an end and lasted till 1315 B.C. The next (but also the only) fixed point for the chronology is afforded by the stela of [the Pharaoh] Merenptah (1225–15 B.C.), which boasts of his victory over Isiraal (Israel) and the laying waste of her seed (?). The sense to be attached to this inscription is unfortunately doubtful, it is

comparison with Assyrian history, for instance, must increase our surprise at this. It may, of course, be accounted for by the fact that Egyptian history was entirely written to serve official ends.

[1] [*Numbers*, xiv, 33.] [2] [*Exodus*, xxxii, 19.]

supposed to prove that the Israelite tribes were already at that time settled in Canaan.[1] Eduard Meyer rightly concludes from this stela that Merenptah cannot have been the Pharaoh of the Exodus, as had been lightly assumed previously. The date of the Exodus must have been earlier. The question of who was the Pharaoh of the Exodus seems to me altogether an idle one. There was no Pharaoh of the Exodus, for it occurred during an interregnum. Nor does the discovery of the stela of Merenptah throw any light on the possible date of the union and founding of the religion at Kadesh. All that we can say with certainty is that it was some time between 1350 and 1215 B.C. We suspect that the Exodus comes somewhere very near the beginning of this hundred years and the events at Kadesh not too far away from its end. We should like to claim the greater part of this period for the interval between the two occurrences. For we need a comparatively long time for the passions of the returning tribes to have cooled down after the murder of Moses and for the influence of his followers, the Levites, to have become as great as is implied by the compromise at Kadesh. Two generations, sixty years, might about suffice for this, but it is a tight fit. What is inferred from the stela of Merenptah comes too early for us, and since we recognize that in this hypothesis of ours one supposition is only based on another, we must admit that this discussion reveals a weak side of our construction. It is unlucky that everything relating to the settlement of the Jewish people in Canaan is so obscure and confused. Our only resort, perhaps, is to suppose that the name on the 'Israel' stela does not relate to the tribes whose fortunes we are trying to follow and which combined to form the later people of Israel. After all, the name of 'Habiru' (Hebrews) was transferred to these same people in the Amarna period [p. 29].

The union of the tribes into a nation through the adoption of a common religion, whenever it may have taken place, might easily have turned out quite an unimportant happening in world history. The new religion would have been carried away by the current of events, Yahweh would have had to take his place in the procession of departed gods in Flaubert's vision,[2] and all twelve of his tribes would have been 'lost' and not only the ten of them which the Anglo-Saxons have been in search of

[1] Eduard Meyer, 1906, 222 ff.

[2] [In *La tentation de Saint Antoine.*]

for so long. The god Yahweh, to whom the Midianite Moses then presented a new people, was probably in no respect a prominent being. A coarse, narrow-minded, local god, violent and bloodthirsty, he had promised his followers to give them 'a land flowing with milk and honey' [1] and urged them to exterminate its present inhabitants 'with the edge of the sword'.[2] It is astonishing how much remains, in spite of all the revisions of the Biblical narratives, that allows us to recognize his original nature. It is not even certain that his religion was a genuine monotheism, that it denied the divinity of the deities of other peoples. It was enough probably that his people regarded their own god as more powerful than any foreign god. If, nevertheless, in the sequel everything took a different course from what such beginnings would have led one to expect, the cause can be found in only one fact. The Egyptian Moses had given to one portion of the people a more highly spiritualized notion of god, the idea of a single deity embracing the whole world, who was not less all-loving than all-powerful, who was averse to all ceremonial and magic and set before men as their highest aim a life in truth and justice. For, however incomplete may be the accounts we have of the ethical side of the Aten religion, it can be no unimportant fact that Akhenaten regularly referred to himself in his inscriptions as 'living in Ma'at' (truth, justice).[3] In the long run it made no difference that the people rejected the teaching of Moses (probably after a short time) and killed him himself. The *tradition* of it remained and its influence achieved (only gradually, it is true, in the course of centuries) what was denied to Moses himself. The god Yahweh had arrived at undeserved honour when, from the time of Kadesh onwards, he was credited with the deed of liberation which had been performed by Moses; but he had to pay heavily for this usurpation. The shadow of the god whose place he had taken became stronger than himself; by the end of the process of evolution, the nature of the forgotten god of Moses had come to light behind his own. No one can doubt that it was only the idea of this other god that enabled the people of Israel to

[1] [*Exodus*, iii, 8.]

[2] [*Deuteronomy*, xiii, 15.]

[3] His hymns lay stress not only on the god's universality and oneness, but also on his loving care for all creatures; and they encourage joy in nature and enjoyment of its beauty. (Breasted, 1934, [281–302].)

survive all the blows of fate and that kept them alive to our own days.

It is no longer possible to estimate the share taken by the Levites in the final victory of the Mosaic god over Yahweh. They had taken the side of Moses in the past, when the compromise was reached at Kadesh, in a still live memory of the master whose retinue and compatriots they had been. During the centuries since then they had become merged with the people or with the priesthood, and it had become the main function of the priests to develop and supervise the ritual, and besides this to preserve the holy writ and revise it in accordance with their aims. But was not all sacrifice and all ceremonial at bottom only magic and sorcery, such as had been unconditionally rejected by the old Mosaic teaching? Thereupon there arose from among the midst of the people an unending succession of men who were not linked to Moses in their origin but were enthralled by the great and mighty tradition which had grown up little by little in obscurity: and it was these men, the Prophets, who tirelessly preached the old Mosaic doctrine – that the deity disdained sacrifice and ceremonial and asked only for faith and a life in truth and justice (Ma'at). The efforts of the Prophets had a lasting success; the doctrines with which they re-established the old faith became the permanent content of the Jewish religion. It is honour enough to the Jewish people that they could preserve such a tradition and produce men who gave it a voice – even though the initiative to it came from outside, from a great foreigner.

I should not feel secure in giving this account, if I could not appeal to the judgement of other enquirers with a specialist knowledge who see the significance of Moses for the Jewish religion in the same light as I do, even though they do not recognize his Egyptian origin. Thus, for instance, Sellin (1922, 52) writes: 'Consequently we must picture the true religion of Moses – his belief in the one moral God whom he preaches – as thenceforward necessarily the property of a small circle of the people. We must necessarily not expect to meet with it in the official cult, in the religion of the priests or in the beliefs of the people. We can necessarily only reckon to find an occasional spark emerging, now here and now there, from the spiritual torch which he once kindled, to find that his ideas have not entirely perished but have been silently at work here and there

upon beliefs and customs, till sooner or later, through the effect of special experiences or of persons specially moved by his spirit, it has broken out more strongly once more and gained influence on wider masses of the population. It is from this point of view that the history of the ancient religion of Israel is necessarily to be regarded. Anyone who sought to construct the Mosaic religion on the lines of the religion we meet with, according to the chronicles, in the life of the people during their first five hundred years in Canaan, would be committing the gravest methodological error.' Volz (1907, 64) speaks even more clearly: it is his belief that 'the exalted work of Moses was understood and carried through to begin with only feebly and scantily, till, in the course of centuries, it penetrated more and more, and at length in the great Prophets it met with like spirits who continued the lonely man's work.'

And here, it seems, I have reached the conclusion of my study, which was directed to the single aim of introducing the figure of an Egyptian Moses into the nexus of Jewish history. Our findings may be thus expressed in the most concise formula. Jewish history is familiar to us for its dualities: *two* groups of people who came together to form the nation, *two* kingdoms into which this nation fell apart, *two* gods' names in the documentary sources of the Bible. To these we add two fresh ones: the foundation of *two* religions—the first repressed by the second but nevertheless later emerging victoriously behind it, and *two* religious founders, who are both called by the same name of Moses and whose personalities we have to distinguish from each other. All of these dualities are the necessary consequences of the first one: the fact that one portion of the people had an experience which must be regarded as traumatic and which the other portion escaped. Beyond this there would be a very great deal to discuss, to explain and to assert. Only thus would an interest in our purely historical study find its true justification. What the real nature of a tradition resides in, and what its special power rests on, how impossible it is to dispute the personal influence upon world-history of individual great men, what sacrilege one commits against the splendid diversity of human life if one recognizes only those motives which arise from material needs, from what sources some ideas (and particularly religious ones) derive their power to subject both men and

peoples to their yoke—to study all this in the special case of Jewish history would be an alluring task. To continue my work on such lines as these would be to find a link with the statements I put forward twenty-five years ago in *Totem and Taboo* [1912-1913]. But I no longer feel that I have the strength to do so.

III

MOSES, HIS PEOPLE AND MONOTHEIST RELIGION

PART I

Prefatory Note I

([Vienna], before March, 1938)

With the audacity of one who has little or nothing to lose, I propose for a second time to break a well-grounded intention and to add to my two essays on Moses in *Imago*[1] the final portion which I have held back. I ended the last essay with an assertion that I knew my strength would not be enough for this. By that I meant, of course, the weakening of creative powers which goes along with old age,[2] but I was thinking of another obstacle as well.

We are living in a specially remarkable period. We find to our astonishment that progress has allied itself with barbarism. In Soviet Russia they have set about improving the living conditions of some hundred millions of people who were held firmly in subjection. They have been rash enough to withdraw the 'opium' of religion from them and have been wise enough to give them a reasonable amount of sexual liberty; but at the same time they have submitted them to the most cruel coercion and robbed them of any possibility of freedom of thought. With similar violence, the Italian people are being trained up to orderliness and a sense of duty. We feel it as a relief from an oppressive apprehension when we see in the case of the German people that a relapse into almost prehistoric barbarism can occur as well without being attached to any progressive ideas.

[1] [Essays I and II above.]

[2] I do not share the opinion of my contemporary Bernard Shaw, that human beings would only achieve anything good if they could live to be three hundred years old. A prolongation of life would achieve nothing unless many other fundamental changes were to be made in the conditions of life.

In any case, things have so turned out that to-day the conservative democracies have become the guardians of cultural advance and that, strange to say, it is precisely the institution of the Catholic Church which puts up a powerful defence against the spread of this danger to civilization—the Church which has hitherto been the relentless foe to freedom of thought and to advances towards the discovery of the truth!

We are living here in a Catholic country under the protection of that Church, uncertain how long that protection will hold out. But so long as it lasts, we naturally hesitate to do anything that would be bound to arouse the Church's hostility. This is not cowardice, but prudence. The new enemy, to whom we want to avoid being of service, is more dangerous than the old one with whom we have already learnt to come to terms. The psycho-analytic researches which we carry on are in any case viewed with suspicious attention by Catholicism. I will not maintain that this is unjustly so. If our work leads us to a conclusion which reduces religion to a neurosis of humanity and explains its enormous power in the same way as a neurotic compulsion in our individual patients, we may be sure of drawing the resentment of our ruling powers down upon us. Not that I should have anything to say that would be new or that I did not say clearly a quarter of a century ago:[1] but it has been forgotten in the meantime and it could not be without effect if I repeated it to-day and illustrated it from an example which offers a standard for all religious foundations. It would probably lead to our being prohibited from practising psycho-analysis. Such violent methods of suppression are, indeed, by no means alien to the Church; the fact is rather that it feels it as an invasion of its privileges if someone else makes use of those methods. But psycho-analysis, which in the course of my long life has gone everywhere, still possesses no home that could be more valuable for it than the city in which it was born and grew up.

I do not only think but I *know* that I shall let myself be deterred by this second obstacle, by the external danger, from publishing the last portion of my study on Moses. I have made yet another attempt to get the difficulty out of the way, by telling myself that my fears are based on an over-estimation of

[1] [In *Totem and Taboo* (1912–13).]

my own personal importance' that it will probably be a matter of complete indifference to the authorities what I choose to write about Moses and the origin of monotheist religions. But I feel uncertain in my judgement of this. It seems to me much more possible that malice and sensationalism will counterbalance any lack of recognition of me in the contemporary world's judgement. So I shall not give this work to the public. But that need not prevent my writing it. Especially as I have written it down already once, two years ago,[1] so that I have only to revise it and attach it to the two essays that have preceded it. It may then be preserved in concealment till some day the time arrives when it may venture without danger into the light, or till someone who has reached the same conclusions and opinions can be told: 'there was someone in darker times who thought the same as you!'

[1] [Freud seems in fact to have written it originally *four* years previously, in 1934, and perhaps to have given it a first major revision in 1936 See above, pp. 3 4.]

Freud reading the manuscript of *Moses and Monotheism* in London, 1938

Prefatory Note II

([London], June, 1938)

The quite special difficulties which have weighed on me during my composition of this study relating to the figure of Moses —internal doubts as well as external obstacles— have resulted in this third and concluding essay being introduced by two different prefaces, which contradict each other and indeed cancel each other out. For in the short space of time between the two there has been a fundamental change in the author's circumstances. At the earlier date I was living under the protection of the Catholic Church, and was afraid that the publication of my work would result in the loss of that protection and would conjure up a prohibition upon the work of the adherents and students of psycho-analysis in Austria. Then, suddenly, came the German invasion and Catholicism proved, to use the words of the Bible, 'a broken reed'. In the certainty that I should now be persecuted not only for my line of thought but also for my 'race' —accompanied by many of my friends, I left the city which, from my early childhood, had been my home for seventy-eight years.

I met with the friendliest reception in lovely, free, magnanimous England. Here I now live, a welcome guest; I can breathe a sigh of relief now that the weight has been taken off me and that I am once more able to speak and write —I had almost said 'and think'— as I wish or as I must. I venture to bring the last portion of my work before the public.

There are no external obstacles remaining, or at least none to be frightened of. In the few weeks of my stay here I have received countless greetings from friends who were pleased at my arrival, and from unknown and indeed uninvolved strangers who only wanted to give expression to their satisfaction at my having found freedom and safety here. And in addition there arrived, with a frequency surprising to a foreigner, communications of another sort, which were concerned with the state of my soul, which pointed out to me the way of Christ and sought to enlighten me on the future of Israel. The good people who

wrote in this way cannot have known much about me; but I expect that when this work about Moses becomes known, in a translation, among my new compatriots, I shall forfeit enough of the sympathy which a number of other people as well now feel for me.

As regards *internal* difficulties, a political revolution and a change of domicile could alter nothing. No less than before, I feel uncertain in the face of my own work; I lack the consciousness of unity and of belonging together which should exist between an author and his work. It is not as though there were an absence of conviction in the correctness of my conclusion. I acquired that a quarter of a century ago when in 1912 I wrote my book about *Totem and Taboo*, and it has only grown firmer since. From that time I have never doubted that religious phenomena are only to be understood on the pattern of the individual neurotic symptoms familiar to us as the return of long since forgotten, important events in the primaeval history of the human family—and that they have to thank precisely this origin for their compulsive character and that, accordingly, they are effective on human beings by force of the historical truth[1] of their content. My uncertainty sets in only when I ask myself whether I have succeeded in proving these theses in the example which I have chosen here of Jewish monotheism. To my critical sense this book, which takes its start from the man Moses, appears like a dancer balancing on the tip of one toe. If I could not find support in an analytic interpretation of the exposure myth and could not pass from there to Sellin's suspicion about the end of Moses, the whole thing would have had to remain unwritten. In any case, let us now take the plunge.

[1] [See below, p. 127 ff.]

A

The Historical Premiss[1]

Here, then, is the historical background of the events which have absorbed our interest. As a result of the conquests of the Eighteenth Dynasty, Egypt became a world-empire. The new imperialism was reflected in the development of the religious ideas, if not of the whole people, at least of its ruling and intellectually active upper stratum. Under the influence of the priests of the sun-god at On (Heliopolis), strengthened perhaps by impulses from Asia, the idea arose of a universal god Aten to whom restriction to a single country and a single people no longer applied. In the young Amenophis IV a Pharaoh came to the throne who had no higher interest than the development of this idea of a god. He promoted the religion of Aten into the state religion, and through him the universal god became the *only* god: everything that was told of other gods was deceit and lies. With magnificent inflexibility he resisted every temptation to magical thought, and he rejected the illusion, so dear to Egyptians in particular, of a life after death. In an astonishing presentiment of later scientific discovery he recognized in the energy of solar radiation the source of all life on earth and worshipped it as the symbol of the power of his god. He boasted of his joy in the creation and of his life in Ma'at (truth and justice).

This is the first and perhaps the clearest case of a monotheist religion in human history; a deeper insight into the historical and psychological determinants of its origin would be of immeasurable value. Care has however been taken that none too much information about the Aten religion should reach us. Already under Akhenaten's feeble successors all that he had created collapsed. The vengeance of the priesthood which he had suppressed raged against his memory, the Aten religion was abolished, the capital city of the Pharaoh, who was branded as a criminal, was destroyed and plundered. In about 1350 B.C.

[1] I begin with a *résumé* of the findings of my second study on Moses, the purely historical one. Those findings will not be submitted here to any fresh criticism, since they form the premiss to the psychological discussions which start out from them and constantly go back to them.

the Eighteenth Dynasty came to an end, after a period of anarchy, order was restored by general Haremhab, who reigned till 1315 B.C. Akhenaten's reform seemed to be an episode doomed to be forgotten.

Thus far what is established historically; and now our hypothetical sequel begins. Among those in Akhenaten's *entourage* there was a man who was perhaps called Tuthmosis, like many other people at that time[1] the name is not of great importance except that its second component must have been '-mose'. He was in a high position and a convinced adherent of the Aten religion, but, in contrast to the meditative king, he was energetic and passionate. For him the death of Aknenaten and the abolition of his religion meant the end of all his expectations. He could remain in Egypt only as an outlaw or as a renegade. Perhaps as governor of the frontier province he had come in contact with a Semitic tribe which had immigrated into it a few generations earlier. Under the necessity of his disappointment and loneliness he turned to these foreigners and with them sought compensation for his losses. He chose them as his people and tried to realize his ideals in them. After he had left Egypt with them, accompanied by his followers, he made them holy by the mark of circumcision, gave them laws and introduced them into the doctrines of the Aten religion, which the Egyptians had just thrown off. The precepts which this man Moses gave to his Jews may have been even harsher than those of his master and teacher Akhenaten, and he may, too, have given up dependence on the sun-god of On, to which Akhenaten had continued to adhere.

We must take the period of the interregnum after 1350 B.C. as the date of the Exodus from Egypt. The interval of time which followed, up to the completion of the occupation of the land of Canaan, is particularly inscrutable. Modern historical research has been able to extract two facts from the obscurity which the biblical narrative has left, or rather created, at this point. The first of these facts, discovered by Ernst Sellin, is that the Jews, who, even by the account in the Bible, were headstrong and unruly towards their law-giver and leader, rose against him one day, killed him and threw off the religion of the

[1] Such as, for instance, the sculptor whose studio was found at Tell el-'Amarna.

Aten which had been imposed on them, just as the Egyptians had thrown it off earlier. The second fact, demonstrated by Eduard Meyer, is that those Jews who had returned from Egypt united later on with closely related tribes in the region between Palestine, the Sinai Peninsula and Arabia, and that there, in a well-watered locality named Kadesh, under the influence of the Arabian Midianites, they took on a new religion, the worship of the volcano god Yahweh. Soon after this they were ready to invade Canaan as conquerors.

The chronological relations of these two events to each other and to the Exodus from Egypt are very uncertain. The closest historical point of reference is provided by a stela of the Pharaoh Merenptah (who reigned till 1215 B.C.) which in the course of a report on campaigns in Syria and Palestine names 'Israel' among the defeated enemy. If we take the date of this stela as a *terminus ad quem*, we are left with about a century (from after 1350 to before 1215 B.C.) for the whole course of events, starting from the Exodus. It is possible, however, that the name 'Israel' did not yet relate to the tribes whose fortunes we are following and that in fact we have a longer interval at our disposal. The settlement in Canaan of what was later the Jewish people was certainly no rapidly completed conquest but took place in waves and over considerable periods of time. If we free ourselves from the limitation imposed by the Merenptah stela, we can all the more easily assign one generation (thirty years) to the period of Moses,[1] and allow at least two generations, but probably more, to elapse up to the time of the union at Kadesh.[2] The interval between Kadesh and the irruption into Canaan need only be short. The Jewish tradition, as was shown in the preceding essay [p. 48], had good grounds for shortening the interval between the Exodus and the founding of the religion at Kadesh, while the reverse is in the interest of our account.

All this, however, is still history, an attempt to fill up the gaps in our historical knowledge and in part a repetition of my second essay in *Imago* [Essay II above]. Our interest follows the fortunes of Moses and of his doctrines, to which the rising of the

[1] This would correspond to the forty years of wandering in the wilderness of the Bible text [*Numbers*, xiv, 33].

[2] Thus we should have about 1350 (or 1340, 1320 (or 1310) B.C. for the Moses period; 1260 B.C., or preferably later, for Kadesh, the Merenptah stela before 1215 B.C.

Jews had only apparently put an end. From the account given by the Yahwist, which was written down in about 1000 B.C. but was certainly based on earlier records,[1] we have discovered that the union and the founding of the religion at Kadesh were accompanied by a compromise in which the two sides are still easily distinguishable. The one partner was only concerned to disavow the novelty and foreign character of the god Yahweh and to increase his claim to the people's devotion; the other partner was anxious not to sacrifice to him precious memories of the liberation from Egypt and of the grand figure of the leader, Moses. The second side succeeded, too, in introducing both the fact and the man into the new account of prehistory, in retaining at least the external mark of the religion of Moses — circumcision — and possibly in establishing certain restrictions on the use of the name of the new god. As we have said, the representatives of these claims were the descendants of the followers of Moses, the Levites, who were separated from his contemporaries and compatriots by only a few generations and were still attached to his memory by a living recollection. The poetically embellished narrative which we attribute to the Yahwist, and to his later rival the Elohist, were like mausoleums beneath which, withdrawn from the knowledge of later generations, the true account of those early things — of the nature of the Mosaic religion and of the violent end of the great man — was, as it were, to find its eternal rest. And if we have guessed what happened correctly, there is nothing left about it that is puzzling; but it might very well have signified the final end of the Moses episode in the history of the Jewish people.

The remarkable thing, however, is that that was not the case — that the most powerful effects of the people's experience were to come to light only later and to force their way into reality in the course of many centuries. It is unlikely that Yahweh differed much in character from the gods of the surrounding peoples and tribes. It is true that he struggled with them, just as the peoples themselves fought with one another, but we cannot suppose that it came into the head of a Yahweh-worshipper of those days to deny the existence of the gods of Canaan or

[1] ['*Fixierungen*.' The word is not used here in the usual psychoanalytic sense of 'fixations'. See however, a footnote to Chapter IV of *An Outline of Psycho-Analysis* (1940*a* [1938]), p. 160 below.]

Moab or Amalek, and so on, any more than to deny the existence of the peoples who believed in them.

The monotheist idea, which had flared up with Akhenaten, had grown dark once more and was to remain in darkness for a long time to come. Finds in the island of Elephantine, just below the First Cataract of the Nile, have given us the surprising information that a Jewish military colony had been settled there for centuries, in whose temple, alongside of the chief god Yahu, two female deities were worshipped, one of them named Anat-Yahu. These Jews, it is true, were cut off from their mother-country and had not taken part in the religious development there; the Persian government of Egypt (of the fifth century B.C.) conveyed information to them of the new rules of worship issued from Jerusalem.[1] Going back to earlier times, we may say that the god Yahweh certainly bore no resemblance to the Mosaic god. Aten had been a pacifist like his representative on earth—or more properly, his prototype—the Pharaoh Akhenaten, who looked on passively while the world-empire conquered by his ancestors fell to pieces. No doubt Yahweh was better suited to a people who were starting out to occupy new homelands by force. And everything in the Mosaic god that deserved admiration was quite beyond the comprehension of the primitive masses.

I have already said—and on that point I have been glad to be able to claim agreement with other writers—that the central fact of the development of the Jewish religion was that in the course of time the god Yahweh lost his own characteristics and grew more and more to resemble the old god of Moses, the Aten. It is true that differences remained to which one would be inclined at a first glance to attribute great importance; but these can easily be explained.

In Egypt Aten had begun to dominate during a fortunate period of established possession, and even when the empire began to totter, his worshippers had been able to turn away from the disturbance and continued to praise and to enjoy his creations. The Jewish people were fated to experience a series of grave trials and painful events; their god became harsh and severe and, as it were, wrapped in gloom. He retained the characteristic of being a universal god, reigning over all countries and peoples, but the fact that his worship had passed over

[1] Auerbach, **2**, 1936.

from the Egyptians to the Jews found expression in the additional belief that the Jews were his chosen people whose special obligations would eventually meet with a special reward as well. It may not have been easy for the people to reconcile a belief in being preferred by their omnipotent god with the sad experiences of their unfortunate destiny. But they did not allow themselves to be shaken in their convictions; they increased their own sense of guilt in order to stifle their doubts of God, and it may be that they pointed at last to the 'inscrutable decrees of Providence', as pious people do to this day. If they felt inclined to wonder at his allowing one violent aggressor after another to arise and overthrow and maltreat them — Assyrians, Babylonians, Persians — they could yet recognize his power in the fact that all these evil foes were themselves conquered in turn and that their empires vanished.

In three important respects the later god of the Jews became in the end like the old Mosaic god. The first and decisive point is that he was truly acknowledged as the only god, beside whom any other god was unthinkable. Akhenaten's monotheism was taken seriously by an entire people; indeed, that people clung so much to this idea that it became the main content of their intellectual life[1] and left them no interest for other things. On this the people and the priesthood who had become dominant among them were at one. But whereas the priests exhausted their efforts in erecting the ceremonial for his worship, they came in opposition to intense currents among the people which sought to revive two others of the doctrines of Moses about his god. The voices of the Prophets never tired of declaring that God despised ceremonial and sacrifice and required only that people should believe in him and lead a life in truth and justice. And when they praised the simplicity and holiness of life in the wilderness they were certainly under the influence of the Mosaic ideals.

It is time to raise the question of whether there is any need whatever to call in the influence of Moses as a cause of the final form taken by the Jewish idea of God, or whether it would not be enough to assume a spontaneous development to higher intellectuality[2] during a cultural life extending over hundreds

[1] ['*Geistesleben*.' Cf. the next footnote.]

[2] ['*Geistigkeit*.' See the discussion of the rendering of this word in the footnote on p. 86 below.]

of years. There are two things to be said about this possible explanation which would put an end to all our puzzling conjectures. First, that it explains nothing. In the case of the Greeks unquestionably a most highly gifted people—the same conditions did not lead to monotheism but to a disintegration of their polytheist religion and to the beginning of philosophical thought. In Egypt, so far as we can understand, monotheism grew up as a by-product of imperialism God was a reflection of the Pharaoh who was the absolute ruler of a great world-empire. With the Jews, political conditions were highly unfavourable for the development from the idea of an exclusive national god to that of a universal ruler of the world. And where did this tiny and powerless nation find the arrogance to declare itself the favourite child of the great Lord? The problem of the origin of monotheism among the Jews would thus remain unsolved, or we should have to be content with the common answer that it is the expression of the peculiar religious genius of that people. Genius is well known to be incomprehensible and irresponsible, and we ought therefore not to bring it up as an explanation till every other solution has failed us.[1]

In addition to this, we come upon the fact that Jewish records and historical writings themselves point us the way, by asserting most definitely this time without contradicting themselves that the idea of a single god was brought to the people by Moses. If there is an objection to the trustworthiness of this assurance, it is that the priestly revision of the text we have before us obviously traces far too much back to Moses. Institutions such as the ritual ordinances, which date unmistakably from later times, are given out as Mosaic commandments with the plain intention of lending them authority. This certainly gives us ground for suspicion, but not enough for a rejection. For the deeper motive for an exaggeration of this kind is obvious. The priestly narrative seeks to establish continuity between its contemporary period and the remote Mosaic past, it seeks to disavow precisely what we have described as the most striking fact about Jewish religious history, namely that there is a yawning gap between the law-giving of Moses and the later Jewish religion a gap which was at first filled by the worship

[1] This same consideration applies, too, to the remarkable case of William Shakespeare of Stratford. [See footnote to *An Outline of Psycho-Analysis*, p. 192 below.]

of Yahweh, and was only slowly patched up afterwards. It disputes this course of events by every possible means, though its historical correctness is established beyond any doubt, since, in the particular treatment given to the Biblical text, superabundant evidence has been left to prove it. Here the priestly revision has attempted something similar to the tendentious distortion which made the new god Yahweh into the god of the Patriarchs [p. 44]. If we take this motive of the Priestly Code into account, we shall find it hard to withhold our belief from the assertion that Moses really did himself give the monotheist idea to the Jews. We should be all the readier to give our assent since we can say where Moses derived this idea from, which the Jewish priests certainly knew no longer.

And here someone might ask what we gain by tracing Jewish to Egyptian monotheism. It merely pushes the problem a little way further back: it tells us nothing more of the genesis of the monotheist idea. The answer is that the question is not one of gain but of investigation. Perhaps we may learn something from it if we discover the real course of events.

II

The Latency Period and Tradition

We confess the belief, therefore, that the idea of a single god, as well as the rejection of magically effective ceremonial and the stress upon ethical demands made in his name, were in fact Mosaic doctrines, to which no attention was paid to begin with, but which, after a long interval had elapsed, came into operation and eventually became permanently established. How are we to explain a delayed effect of this kind and where do we meet with a similar phenomenon?

It occurs to us at once that such things are not infrequently to be found in the most various spheres and that they probably come about in a number of ways which are understandable with greater or less ease. Let us take, for instance, the history of a new scientific theory, such as Darwin's theory of evolution. At first it met with embittered rejection and was violently disputed for decades, but it took no longer than a generation for it to be recognized as a great step forward towards truth. Darwin

himself achieved the honour of a grave or cenotaph in Westminster Abbey. A case such as that leaves us little to unravel. The new truth awoke emotional resistances; these found expression in arguments by which the evidence in favour of the unpopular theory could be disputed; the struggle of opinions took up a certain length of time; from the first there were adherents and opponents; the number as well as the weight of the former kept on increasing till at last they gained the upper hand; during the whole time of the struggle the subject with which it was concerned was never forgotten. We are scarcely surprised that the whole course of events took a considerable length of time, and we probably do not sufficiently appreciate that what we are concerned with is a process in group psychology.

There is no difficulty in finding an analogy in the mental life of an individual corresponding precisely to this process. Such would be the case if a person learnt something new to him which, on the ground of certain evidence, he ought to recognize as true, but which contradicts some of his wishes and shocks a few convictions that are precious to him. Thereupon he will hesitate, seek for reasons to enable him to throw doubts on this new thing, and for a while will struggle with himself, till finally he admits to himself 'All the same it is so, though it's not easy for me to accept it, though it's distressing to me to have to believe it.' What we learn from this is merely that it takes time for the reasoning activity of the ego to overcome the objections that are maintained by strong affective cathexes. The similarity between this case and the one we are endeavouring to understand is not very great.

The next example we turn to appears to have even less in common with our problem. It may happen that a man who has experienced some frightful accident—a railway collision, for instance—leaves the scene of the event apparently uninjured. In the course of the next few weeks, however, he develops a number of severe psychical and motor symptoms which can only be traced to his shock, the concussion or whatever else it was. He now has a 'traumatic neurosis'. It is a quite unintelligible that is to say, a new fact. The time that has passed between the accident and the first appearance of the symptoms is described as the 'incubation period', in a clear allusion to the pathology of infectious diseases. On reflection, it must strike us

that, in spite of the fundamental difference between the two cases the problem of traumatic neurosis and that of Jewish monotheism -there is nevertheless one point of agreement: namely, in the characteristic that might be described as 'latency'. According to our assured hypothesis, in the history of the Jewish religion there was a long period after the defection from the religion of Moses during which no sign was to be detected of the monotheist idea, of the contempt for ceremonial or of the great emphasis on ethics. We are thus prepared for the possibility that the solution of our problem is to be looked for in a particular psychological situation.

We have already repeatedly described what happened at Kadesh when the two portions of what was later to be the Jewish people came together to receive a new religion. In those, on the one hand, who had been in Egypt, memories of the Exodus and of the figure of Moses were still so strong and vivid that they demanded their inclusion in an account of early times. They were grandchildren, perhaps, of people who had known Moses himself, and some of them still felt themselves Egyptians and bore Egyptian names. But they had good motives for repressing the memory of the fate with which their leader and lawgiver had met. The determining purpose of the other portion of the people was to glorify the new god and to dispute his being foreign. Both portions had the same interest in disavowing the fact of their having had an earlier religion and the nature of its content. So it was that the first compromise came about, and it was probably soon recorded in writing The people who had come from Egypt had brought writing and the desire to write history along with them, but it was to be a long time before historical writing realized that it was pledged to unswerving truthfulness. To begin with it had no scruples about shaping its narratives according to the needs and purposes of the moment, as though it had not yet recognized the concept of falsification. As a result of these circumstances a discrepancy was able to grow up between the written record and the oral transmission of the same material *tradition*. What had been omitted or changed in the written record might very well have been preserved intact in tradition. Tradition was a supplement but at the same time a contradiction to historical writing. It was less subjected to the influence of distorting purposes and perhaps

at some points quite exempt from them, and it might therefore be more truthful than the account that had been recorded in writing. Its trustworthiness, however, suffered from the fact that it was less stable and definite than the written account and exposed to numerous changes and alterations when it was handed on from one generation to another by oral communication. A tradition of such a kind might meet with various sorts of fate. What we should most expect would be that it would be crushed by the written account, would be unable to stand up against it, would become more and more shadowy and would finally pass into oblivion. But it might meet with other fates: one of these would be that the tradition itself would end in a written record, and we shall have to deal with yet others as we proceed.

The phenomenon of latency in the history of the Jewish religion, with which we are dealing, may be explained, then, by the circumstance that the facts and ideas which were intentionally disavowed by what may be called the official historians were in fact never lost. Information about them persisted in traditions which survived among the people. As we are assured by Sellin, indeed, there was actually a tradition about the end of Moses which flatly contradicted the official account and was far nearer the truth. The same, we may assume, also applied to other things which apparently ceased to exist at the same time as Moses—to some of the contents of the Mosaic religion, which had been unacceptable to the majority of his contemporaries.

The remarkable fact with which we are here confronted is, however, that these traditions, instead of becoming weaker with time, became more and more powerful in the course of centuries, forced their way into the later revisions of the official accounts and finally showed themselves strong enough to have a decisive influence on the thoughts and actions of the people. The determinants which made this outcome possible are for the moment, it is true, outside our knowledge.

This fact is so remarkable that we feel justified in looking at it once again. Our problem is comprised in it. The Jewish people had abandoned the Aten religion brought to them by Moses and had turned to the worship of another god who differed little from the Baalim[1] of the neighbouring peoples.

[1] [Local gods.]

All the tendentious efforts of later times failed to disguise this shameful fact. But the Mosaic religion had not vanished without leaving a trace; some sort of memory of it had kept alive – a possibly obscured and distorted tradition. And it was this tradition of a great past which continued to operate (from the background, as it were), which gradually acquired more and more power over people's minds and which in the end succeeded in changing the god Yahweh into the Mosaic god and in re-awakening into life the religion of Moses that had been introduced and then abandoned long centuries before. That a tradition thus sunk in oblivion should exercise such a powerful effect on the mental life of a people is an unfamiliar idea to us. We find ourselves here in the field of group psychology, where we do not feel at home. We shall look about for analogies, for facts that are at least of a similar nature, even though in different fields. And facts of that sort are, I believe, to be found.

During the period at which, among the Jews, the return of the religion of Moses was in preparation, the Greek people found themselves in possession of an exceedingly rich store of tribal legends and hero-myths. It is believed that the ninth or eighth century B.C. saw the origin of the two Homeric epics, which drew their material from this circle of legends. With our present psychological insight we could, long before Schliemann and Evans, have raised the question of where it was that the Greeks obtained all the legendary material which was worked over by Homer and the great Attic dramatists in their masterpieces. The answer would have had to be that this people had probably experienced in their prehistory a period of external brilliance and cultural efflorescence which had perished in a historical catastrophe and of which an obscure tradition survived in these legends. The archaeological researches of our days have now confirmed this suspicion, which in the past would certainly have been pronounced too daring. These researches have uncovered the evidences of the impressive Minoan-Mycenaean civilization, which had probably already come to an end on the mainland of Greece before 1250 B.C. There is scarcely a hint at it to be found in the Greek historians of a later age: at most a remark that there was a time when the Cretans exercised command of the sea, and the name of King Minos and of his palace, the Labyrinth. That is all, and beyond

it nothing has remained but the traditions which were seized on by the poets.

National epics of other peoples—Germans, Indians, Finns—have come to light as well. It is the business of historians of literature to investigate whether we may assume the same determinants for their origin as with the Greeks. Such an investigation would, I believe, yield a positive result. Here is the determinant which we recognize: a piece of prehistory which, immediately after it, would have been bound to appear rich in content, important, splendid, and always, perhaps, heroic, but which lies so far back, in such remote times, that only an obscure and incomplete tradition informs later generations of it. Surprise has been felt that the epic as an art-form has become extinct in later times. The explanation may be that its determining cause no longer exists. The old material was used up and for all later events historical writing took the place of tradition. The greatest heroic deeds of our days have not been able to inspire an epic, and even Alexander the Great had a right to complain that he would find no Homer.

Long-past ages have a great and often puzzling attraction for men's imagination. Whenever they are dissatisfied with their present surroundings—and this happens often enough—they turn back to the past and hope that they will now be able to prove the truth of the unextinguishable dream of a golden age.[1] They are probably still under the spell of their childhood, which is presented to them by their not impartial memory as a time of uninterrupted bliss.

If all that is left of the past are the incomplete and blurred memories which we call tradition, this offers an artist a peculiar attraction, for in that case he is free to fill in the gaps in memory according to the desires of his imagination and to picture the period which he wishes to reproduce according to his intentions. One might almost say that the vaguer a tradition has become the more serviceable it becomes for a poet. We need not therefore be surprised at the importance of tradition for imaginative writing, and the analogy with the manner in which epics are determined will make us more inclined to accept the strange

[1] This was the situation on which Macaulay based his *Lays of Ancient Rome*. He put himself in the place of a minstrel who, depressed by the confused party strife of his own day, presented his hearers with the self-sacrifice, the unity and the patriotism of their ancestors.

hypothesis that it was the tradition of Moses which, for the Jews, altered the worship of Yahweh in the direction of the old Mosaic religion. But in other respects the two cases are still too different. On the one hand the outcome is a poem and on the other a religion; and in the latter instance we have assumed that, under the spur of tradition, it was reproduced with a faithfulness for which the instance of the epic can of course offer no counterpart. Accordingly enough of our problem is left over to justify a need for more apposite analogies.

C

The Analogy

The only satisfying analogy to the remarkable course of events that we have found in the history of the Jewish religion lies in an apparently remote field, but it is very complete, and approaches identity. In it we once more come upon the phenomenon of latency, the emergence of unintelligible manifestations calling for an explanation and an early, and later forgotten, event as a necessary determinant. We also find the characteristic of compulsion, which forces itself on the mind along with an overpowering of logical thought a feature which did not come into account, for instance, in the genesis of the epic.

This analogy is met with in psychopathology, in the genesis of human neuroses in a field, that is to say, belonging to the psychology of individuals, while religious phenomena have of course to be reckoned as part of group psychology. We shall see that this analogy is not so surprising as might at first be thought —indeed that it is more like a postulate.

We give the name of *traumas* to those impressions, experienced early and later forgotten, to which we attach such great importance in the aetiology of the neuroses. We may leave on one side the question of whether the aetiology of the neuroses in general may be regarded as traumatic. The obvious objection to this is that it is not possible in every case to discover a manifest trauma in the neurotic subject's earliest history. We must often resign ourselves to saying that all we have before us is an unusual, abnormal reaction to experiences and demands which affect everyone, but are worked over and dealt with by

other people in another manner which may be called normal. When we have nothing else at our disposal for explaining a neurosis but hereditary and constitutional dispositions, we are naturally tempted to say that it was not acquired but developed.

But in this connection two points must be stressed. Firstly, the genesis of a neurosis invariably goes back to very early impressions in childhood.[1] Secondly, it is true that there are cases which are distinguished as being 'traumatic' because their effects go back unmistakably to one or more powerful impressions in these early times—impressions which have escaped being dealt with normally, so that one is inclined to judge that if they had not occurred the neurosis would not have come about either. It would be enough for our purposes if we were obliged to restrict the analogy we are in search of to these traumatic cases. But the gap between the two groups [of cases] appears not to be unbridgeable. It is quite possible to unite the two aetiological determinants under a single conception; it is merely a question of how one defines 'traumatic'. If we may assume that the experience acquires its traumatic character only as a result of a quantitative factor—that is to say, that in every case it is an excess in demand that is responsible for an experience evoking unusual pathological reactions—then we can easily arrive at the expedient of saying that something acts as a trauma in the case of one constitution but in the case of another would have no such effect. In this way we reach the concept of a sliding 'complemental series' as it is called,[2] in which two factors converge in fulfilling an aetiological requirement. A less of one factor is balanced by a more of the other; as a rule both factors operate together and it is only at the two ends of the series that there can be any question of a simple motive being at work. After mentioning this, we can disregard the distinction between traumatic and non-traumatic aetiologies as irrelevant to the analogy we are in search of.

In spite of a risk of repetition, it will perhaps be as well to bring together here the facts which comprise the analogy that is

[1] This therefore makes it nonsensical to say that one is practising psycho-analysis if one excludes from examination and consideration precisely these earliest periods—as happens in some quarters. [Cf. Freud's criticisms of Jung's views in his 'History of the Psycho-Analytic Movement' (1914*d*), particularly in *Standard Ed.*, **14**, 63.]

[2] [See *Introductory Lectures*, XXII, (1916–17), *Standard Ed.*, **16**, 347.]

significant for us. They are as follows. Our researches have shown that what we call the phenomena (symptoms) of a neurosis are the result of certain experiences and impressions which for that very reason we regard as aetiological traumas. We now have two tasks before us: to discover (1) the common characteristics of these experiences and (2) those of neurotic symptoms, and in doing so we need not avoid drawing a somewhat schematic picture.

(1) (*a*) All these traumas occur in early childhood up to about the fifth year. Impressions from the time at which a child is beginning to talk stand out as being of particular interest; the periods between the ages of two and four seem to be the most important; it cannot be determined with certainty how long after birth this period of receptivity begins. (*b*) The experiences in question are as a rule totally forgotten, they are not accessible to memory and fall within the period of infantile amnesia, which is usually broken into by a few separate mnemic residues, what are known as 'screen memories'.[1] (*c*) They relate to impressions of a sexual and aggressive nature, and no doubt also to early injuries to the ego (narcissistic mortifications). In this connection it should be remarked that such young children make no sharp distinction between sexual and aggressive acts, as they do later. (Cf. the misunderstanding of the sexual act in a sadistic sense.[2]) The predominance of the sexual factor is, of course, most striking and calls for theoretical consideration.

These three points—the very early appearance of these experiences (during the first five years of life), the fact of their being forgotten and their sexual-aggressive content—are closely interconnected. The traumas are either experiences on the subject's own body or sense perceptions, mostly of something seen and heard—that is, experiences or impressions. The interconnection of these three points is established by a theory, a product of the work of analysis which alone can bring about a knowledge of the forgotten experiences, or, to put it more vividly but also more incorrectly, bring them back to memory. The theory is that, in contrast to popular opinion, the sexual life of human beings (or what corresponds to it later on) exhibits an early efflorescence which comes to an end at about

[1] [See *Introductory Lectures*, XIII, (1916-17), ibid., **15**, 200-1.]

[2] 'The Sexual Theories of Children' (1908*c*), *Standard Ed.*, **9**, 220-2].

the fifth year and is followed by what is known as the period of latency (till puberty) in which there is no further development of sexuality and indeed what has been attained undergoes a retrogression. This theory is confirmed by the anatomical investigation of the growth of the internal genitalia; it leads us to suppose that the human race is descended from a species of animal which reached sexual maturity in five years and rouses a suspicion that the postponement of sexual life and its diphasic onset [in two waves] are intimately connected with the history of hominization.[1] Human beings appear to be the only animal organisms with a latency period and sexual retardation of this kind. Investigations on the primates (which, so far as I know, are not available) would be indispensable for testing this theory. It cannot be a matter of indifference psychologically that the period of infantile amnesia coincides with this early period of sexuality. It may be that this state of things provides the true determinant for the possibility of neurosis, which is in a sense a human prerogative and from this point of view appears as a vestige—a 'survival' [2]—of primaeval times like certain portions of our bodily anatomy.

(2) Two points must be stressed in regard to the common characteristics or peculiarities of neurotic phenomena: (*a*) The effects of traumas are of two kinds, positive and negative. The former are attempts to bring the trauma into operation once again—that is, to remember the forgotten experience or, better still, to make it real, to experience a repetition of it anew, or, even if it was only an early emotional relationship, to revive it in an analogous relationship with someone else. We summarize these efforts under the name of 'fixations' to the trauma and as a 'compulsion to repeat'. They may be taken up into what passes as a normal ego and, as permanent trends in it, may lend it unalterable character-traits, although, or rather precisely because, their true basis and historical origin are forgotten. Thus a man who has spent his childhood in an excessive and to-day forgotten attachment to his mother, may spend his whole life looking for a wife on whom he can make himself dependent and by whom he can arrange to be nourished and supported. A girl who was made the object of a sexual seduction in her early

[1] ['*Menschwerdung*', 'the process of becoming human'.]

[2] [In English in the original.]

childhood may direct her later sexual life so as constantly to provoke similar attacks. It may easily be guessed that from such discoveries about the problem of neurosis we can penetrate to an understanding of the formation of character in general.

The negative reactions follow the opposite aim: that nothing of the forgotten traumas shall be remembered and nothing repeated. We can summarize them as 'defensive reactions'. Their principal expression are what are called 'avoidances', which may be intensified into 'inhibitions' and 'phobias'. These negative reactions too make the most powerful contributions to the stamping of character. Fundamentally they are just as much fixations to the trauma as their opposites, except that they are fixations with a contrary purpose. The symptoms of neurosis in the narrower sense are compromises in which both the trends proceeding from traumas come together, so that the share, now of one and now of the other tendency, finds preponderant expression in them. This opposition between the reactions sets up conflicts which in the ordinary course of events can reach no conclusion.

(*b*) All these phenomena, the symptoms as well as the restrictions on the ego and the stable character-changes, have a *compulsive* quality, that is to say that they have great psychical intensity and at the same time exhibit a far-reaching independence of the organization of the other mental processes, which are adjusted to the demands of the real external world and obey the laws of logical thinking. They [the pathological phenomena] are insufficiently or not at all influenced by external reality, pay no attention to it or to its psychical representatives, so that they may easily come into active opposition to both of them. They are, one might say, a State within a State, an inaccessible party, with which co-operation is impossible, but which may succeed in overcoming what is known as the normal party and forcing it into its service. If this happens, it implies a domination by an internal psychical reality over the reality of the external world and the path to a psychosis lies open.[1] Even if things do not go so far, the

[1] [The distinction between psychical and external reality was already made in Section 2 of Part III of the *Project* of 1895 (1950*a*, *Standard Ed.*, 1), where a discussion of Freud's use of the terms will be found in an Editor's footnote. Cf also p. 130 *n*.]

practical importance of this situation can scarcely be overestimated. The inhibition upon the life of those who are dominated by a neurosis and their incapacity for living constitute a most important factor in a human society and we may recognize in their condition a direct expression of their fixation to an early portion of their past.

And now let us enquire about latency, which, in view of the analogy, is bound to interest us especially. A trauma in childhood may be followed immediately by a neurotic outbreak, an infantile neurosis, with an abundance of efforts at defence, and accompanied by the formation of symptoms. This neurosis may last a considerable time and cause marked disturbances, but it may also run a latent course and be overlooked. As a rule defence retains the upper hand in it; in any case alterations of the ego,[1] comparable to scars, are left behind. It is only rarely that an infantile neurosis continues without interruption into an adult one. Far more often it is succeeded by a period of apparently undisturbed development — a course of things which is supported or made possible by the intervention of the physiological period of latency. Not until later does the change take place with which the definitive neurosis becomes manifest as a belated effect of the trauma. This occurs either at the irruption of puberty or some while later. In the former case it happens because the instincts, intensified by physical maturation, are able now to take up the struggle again in which they were at first defeated by the defence. In the latter case it happens because the reactions and alterations of the ego brought about by the defence now prove a hindrance in dealing with the new tasks of life, so that severe conflicts come about between the demands of the real external world and the ego, which seeks to maintain the organization which it has painstakingly achieved in its defensive struggle. The phenomenon of a latency of the neurosis between the first reactions to the trauma and the later outbreak of the illness must be regarded as typical. This latter illness may also be looked upon as an attempt at cure—as an effort once more to reconcile with the rest those portions of the ego that have been split off by the influence of the trauma and to unite them into a powerful

[1] [See a discussion in the Editor's Note to 'Analysis Terminable and Interminable' (1937*c*), pp. 212–13 below, and Section V of that paper.]

whole *vis-à-vis* the external world. An attempt of this kind seldom succeeds, however, unless the work of analysis comes to its help, and even then not always; it ends often enough in a complete devastation or fragmentation of the ego or in its being overwhelmed[1] by the portion which was early split off and which is dominated by the trauma.

In order to convince the reader, it would be necessary to give detailed reports of the life histories of numerous neurotics. But in view of the diffuseness and difficulty of the topic, this would completely destroy the character of the present work. It would turn into a monograph on the theory of the neuroses and even so would probably only have an effect on that minority of readers who have chosen the study and practice of psychoanalysis as their life-work. Since I am addressing myself here to a wider audience, I can only beg the reader to grant a certain provisional credence to the abridged account I have given above; and this must be accompanied by an admission on my part that the implications to which I am now leading him need only be accepted if the theories on which they are based turn out to be correct.

Nevertheless, I can attempt to tell the story of a single case which exhibits with special clarity some of the characteristics of a neurosis which I have mentioned. We must not expect, of course, that a single case will show everything and we need not feel disappointed if its subject-matter is far removed from the topic for which we are seeking an analogy.

A little boy, who, as is so often the case in middle-class families, shared his parents' bedroom during the first years of his life, had repeated, and indeed regular, opportunities of observing sexual acts between his parents—of seeing some things and hearing still more—at an age when he had scarcely learnt to speak. In his later neurosis, which broke out immediately after his first spontaneous emission, the earliest and most troublesome symptom was a disturbance of sleep. He was extraordinarily sensitive to noises at night and, once he was woken up, was unable to go to sleep again. This disturbance of sleep was a true compromise-symptom. On the one hand it was an

[1] [Cf. an Editor's footnote to *The Ego and the Id* (1923*b*), *Standard Ed.*, 19, 57.]

expression of his defence against the things he had experienced at night, and on the other an attempt to re-establish the waking state in which he was able to listen to those impressions.

The child was aroused prematurely by observations of this kind to an aggressive masculinity and began to excite his little penis with his hand and to attempt various sexual attacks on his mother, thus identifying himself with his father, in whose place he was putting himself. This went on until at last his mother forbade him to touch his penis and further threatened that she would tell his father, who would punish him by taking his sinful organ away. This threat of castration had an extraordinarily powerful traumatic effect on the boy. He gave up his sexual activity and altered his character. Instead of identifying himself with his father, he was afraid of him, adopted a passive attitude to him and, by occasional naughtinesses, provoked him into administering corporal punishment, this had a sexual meaning for him, so that he was thus able to identify himself with his ill-treated mother. He clung to his mother herself more and more anxiously, as though he could not do without her love for a single moment, since he saw in it a protection against the danger of castration which threatened him from his father. In this modification of the Oedipus complex he passed his latency period, which was free from any marked disturbances. He became an exemplary boy and was quite successful at school.

So far we have followed the immediate effect of the trauma and have confirmed the fact of latency.

The arrival of puberty brought with it the manifest neurosis and disclosed its second main symptom — sexual impotence. He had forfeited the sensitivity of his penis, did not attempt to touch it, did not venture to approach a woman for sexual purposes. His sexual activity remained limited to psychical masturbation accompanied by sadistic-masochistic phantasies in which it was not hard to recognize off-shoots of his early observations of intercourse between his parents. The wave of intensified masculinity which puberty brought along with it was employed in furious hatred of his father and insubordination to him. This extreme relation to his father, reckless to the pitch of self-destruction, was responsible as well for his failure in life and his conflicts with the external world. He must be a failure in his profession because his father had forced him into it. Nor

did he make any friends and he was never on good terms with his superiors.

When, burdened by these symptoms and incapacities, he at last, after his father's death, had found a wife, there emerged in him, as though they were the core of his being, character-traits which made contact with him a hard task for those about him. He developed a completely egoistic, despotic, and brutal personality, which clearly felt a need to suppress and insult other people. It was a faithful copy of his father as he had formed a picture of him in his memory: that is to say, a revival of the identification with his father which in the past he had taken on as a little boy from sexual motives. In this part of the story we recognize the *return* of the repressed, which (along with the immediate effects of the trauma and the phenomenon of latency) we have described as among the essential features of a neurosis.

D

Application

Early trauma—defence—latency—outbreak of neurotic illness—partial return of the repressed. Such is the formula which we have laid down for the development of a neurosis. The reader is now invited to take the step of supposing that something occurred in the life of the human species similar to what occurs in the life of individuals: of supposing, that is, that here too events occurred of a sexually aggressive nature, which left behind them permanent consequences but were for the most part fended off and forgotten, and which after a long latency came into effect and created phenomena similar to symptoms in their structure and purpose.

We believe that we can guess these events and we propose to show that their symptom-like consequences are the phenomena of religion. Since the emergence of the idea of evolution no longer leaves room for doubt that the human race has a prehistory, and since this is unknown—that is, forgotten—a conclusion of this kind almost carries the weight of a postulate. When we learn that in both cases the operative and forgotten traumas relate to life in the human family, we can greet this

as a highly welcome, unforeseen bonus which has not been called for by our discussions up to this point.

I put forward these assertions as much as a quarter of a century ago in my *Totem and Taboo* (1912–13) and I need only repeat them here. My construction starts out from a statement of Darwin's [1871, **2**, 362 f.] and takes in a hypothesis of Atkinson's [1903, 220 f.]. It asserts that in primaeval times primitive man lived in small hordes,[1] each under the domination of a powerful male. No date can be assigned to this, nor has it been synchronized with the geological epochs known to us. It is probable that these human creatures had not advanced far in the development of speech. An essential part of the construction is the hypothesis that the events I am about to describe occurred to all primitive men – that is, to all our ancestors. The story is told in an enormously condensed form, as though it had happened on a single occasion, while in fact it covered thousands of years and was repeated countless times during that long period. The strong male was lord and father of the entire horde and unrestricted in his power, which he exercised with violence. All the females were his property – wives and daughters of his own horde and some, perhaps, robbed from other hordes. The lot of his sons was a hard one: if they roused their father's jealousy they were killed or castrated or driven out. Their only resource was to collect together in small communities, to get themselves wives by robbery, and, when one or other of them could succeed in it, to raise themselves into a position similar to their father's in the primal horde. For natural reasons, youngest sons occupied an exceptional position. They were protected by their mother's love, and were able to take advantage of their father's increasing age and succeed him on his death. We seem to detect echoes in legends and fairy tales both of the expulsion of elder sons and of the favouring of youngest sons.

The first decisive step towards a change in this sort of 'social' organization seems to have been that the expelled brothers, living in a community, united to overpower their father and, as was the custom in those days, devoured him raw. There is no need to balk at this cannibalism; it continued far into later times. The essential point, however, is that we attribute the

[1] [Freud always uses this term in the sense of a small and more or less organized group. See *Totem and Taboo*, *Standard Ed.*, **13**, 135 *n.*]

same emotional attitudes to these primitive men that we are able to establish by analytic investigation in the primitives of the present day—in our children. We suppose, that is, that they not only hated and feared their father but also honoured him as a model, and that each of them wished to take his place in reality. We can, if so, understand the cannibalistic act as an attempt to ensure identification with him by incorporating a piece of him.

It must be supposed that after the parricide a considerable time elapsed during which the brothers disputed with one another for their father's heritage, which each of them wanted for himself alone. A realization of the dangers and uselessness of these struggles, a recollection of the act of liberation which they had accomplished together, and the emotional ties with one another which had arisen during the period of their expulsion, led at last to an agreement among them, a sort of social contract. The first form of a social organization came about with a *renunciation of instinct*,[1] a recognition of mutual *obligations*, the introduction of definite *institutions*, pronounced inviolable (holy) —that is to say, the beginnings of morality and justice. Each individual renounced his ideal of acquiring his father's position for himself and of possessing his mother and sisters. Thus the *taboo on incest* and the injunction to *exogamy* came about. A fair amount of the absolute power liberated by the removal of the father passed over to the women; there came a period of *matriarchy*. Recollection of their father persisted at this period of the 'fraternal alliance'. A powerful animal—at first, perhaps, always one that was feared as well—was chosen as a substitute for the father. A choice of this kind may seem strange, but the gulf which men established later between themselves and animals did not exist for primitive peoples; nor does it exist for our children, whose animal phobias we have been able to understand as fear of their father. In relation to the totem animal the original dichotomy in the emotional relation to the father (ambivalence) was wholly retained. On the one hand the totem was regarded as the clan's blood ancestor and protective spirit, who must be worshipped and protected, and on the other hand a festival was appointed at which the same fate was prepared for him that the primal father had met with. He was killed and devoured by all the tribesmen in common. (The

[1] [This is the subject of Section D of Part II, p. 116 ff. below.]

totem meal, according to Robertson Smith [1894].) This great festival was in fact a triumphant celebration of the combined sons' victory over their father.

What is the place of religion in this connection? I think we are completely justified in regarding totemism, with its worship of a father-substitute, with its ambivalence as shown by the totem meal, with its institution of memorial festivals and of prohibitions whose infringement was punished by death we are justified, I say, in regarding totemism as the first form in which religion was manifested in human history and in confirming the fact of its having been linked from the first with social regulations and moral obligations. Here we can only give the most summary survey of the further developments of religion. They no doubt proceeded in parallel with the cultural advances of the human race and with the changes in the structure of human communities.

The first step away from totemism was the humanizing of the being who was worshipped. In place of the animals, human gods appear, whose derivation from the totem is not concealed. The god is still represented either in the form of an animal or at least with an animal's face, or the totem becomes the god's favourite companion, inseparable from him, or legend tells us that the god slew this precise animal, which was after all only a preliminary stage of himself. At a point in this evolution which is not easily determined great mother-goddesses appeared, probably even before the male gods, and afterwards persisted for a long time beside them. In the meantime a great social revolution had occurred. Matriarchy was succeeded by the re-establishment of a patriarchal order. The new fathers, it is true, never achieved the omnipotence of the primal father; there were many of them, who lived together in associations larger than the horde had been. They were obliged to be on good terms with one another, and remained under the limitation of social ordinances. It is likely that the mother-goddesses originated at the time of the curtailment of the matriarchy, as a compensation for the slight upon the mothers. The male deities appear first as sons beside the great mothers and only later clearly assume the features of father-figures. These male gods of polytheism reflect the conditions during the patriarchal age. They are numerous, mutually restrictive, and are occasionally

subordinated to a superior high god. The next step, however, leads us to the theme with which we are here concerned to the return of a single father-god of unlimited dominion.[1]

It must be admitted that this historical survey has gaps in it and is uncertain at some points But anyone who is inclined to pronounce our construction of primaeval history purely imaginary would be gravely under-estimating the wealth and evidential value of the material contained in it. Large portions of the past, which have been linked together here into a whole, are historically attested: totemism and the male confederacies, for instance. Other portions have survived in excellent replicas. Thus authorities have often been struck by the faithful way in which the sense and content of the old totem meal is repeated in the rite of the Christian Communion, in which the believer incorporates the blood and flesh of his god in symbolic form. Numerous relics of the forgotten primaeval age have survived in popular legends and fairy tales, and the analytic study of the mental life of children has provided an unexpected wealth of material for filling the gaps in our knowledge of the earliest times. As contributions to our understanding of the son's relation to the father which is of such great importance, I need only bring forward animal phobias, the fear, which strikes us as so strange, of being eaten by the father, and the enormous intensity of the dread of being castrated. There is nothing wholly fabricated in our construction, nothing which could not be supported on solid foundations.

If our account of primaeval history is accepted as on the whole worthy of belief, two sorts of elements will be recognized in religious doctrines and rituals, on the one hand fixations to the ancient history of the family and survivals of it, and on the other hand revivals of the past and returns, after long intervals, of what has been forgotten. It is this last portion which, hitherto overlooked and therefore not understood, is to be demonstrated here in at least one impressive instance.

[1] [The greater part of the material in this account will be found discussed at much greater length in the fourth essay of *Totem and Taboo*, though there is rather more discussion here than anywhere else of the mother-goddesses. (On this last point, cf. the footnote on p. 46 above. See also some remarks in Chapter XII of *Group Psychology* (1921*c*), *Standard Ed.*, **18**, 135 and 137.) The general subject is taken up again in Section D of Part II, p. 119 ff. below.]

It is worth specially stressing the fact that each portion which returns from oblivion asserts itself with peculiar force, exercises an incomparably powerful influence on people in the mass, and raises an irresistible claim to truth against which logical objections remain powerless: a kind of '*credo quia absurdum*'.[1] This remarkable feature can only be understood on the pattern of the delusions of psychotics. We have long understood that a portion of forgotten truth lies hidden in delusional ideas, that when this returns it has to put up with distortions and misunderstandings, and that the compulsive conviction which attaches to the delusion arises from this core of truth and spreads out on to the errors that wrap it round. We must grant an ingredient such as this of what may be called *historical* truth to the dogmas of religion as well, which, it is true, bear the character of psychotic symptoms but which, as group phenomena, escape the curse of isolation.[2]

No other portion of the history of religion has become so clear to us as the introduction of monotheism into Judaism and its continuation in Christianity if we leave on one side the development which we can trace no less uninterruptedly, from the animal totem to the human god with his regular companions. Each of the four Christian evangelists still has his own favourite animal ; If we provisionally accept the world-empire of the Pharaohs as the determining cause of the emergence of the monotheist idea, we see that that idea, released from its native soil and transferred to another people was, after a long period of latency, taken hold of by them, preserved by them as a precious possession and, in turn, itself kept them alive by giving them pride in being a chosen people: it was the religion of their primal father to which were attached their hope of reward, of distinction and finally of world-dominion. This last wishful phantasy, long abandoned by the Jewish people, still survives among that people's enemies in a belief in a conspiracy by the 'Elders of Zion'. We reserve for discussion in later pages how the special peculiarities of the monotheist religion borrowed from Egypt affected the Jewish people and how it was bound to leave a permanent imprint on their character through its

[1] ['I believe because it is absurd.' Attributed to Tertullian. This had been discussed by Freud in *The Future of an Illusion* (1927*c*), *Standard Ed.*, **21**, 28–9.]

[2] [See p. 127 ff. below.]

rejection of magic and mysticism, its invitation to advances in intellectuality[1] and its encouragement of sublimations; how the people, enraptured by the possession of the truth, overwhelmed by the consciousness of being chosen, came to have a high opinion of what is intellectual and to lay stress on what is moral; and how their melancholy destinies and their disappointments in reality served only to intensify all these trends. For the moment we will follow their development in another direction.

The re-establishment of the primal father in his historic rights was a great step forward but it could not be the end. The other portions of the prehistoric tragedy insisted on being recognized. It is not easy to discern what set this process in motion. It appears as though a growing sense of guilt had taken hold of the Jewish people, or perhaps of the whole civilized world of the time, as a precursor to the return of the repressed material. Till at last one of these Jewish people found, in justifying a politico-religious agitator, the occasion for detaching a new — the Christian religion from Judaism. Paul, a Roman Jew from Tarsus, seized upon this sense of guilt and traced it back correctly to its original source. He called this the 'original sin'; it was a crime against God and could only be atoned for by death. With the original sin death came into the world. In fact this crime deserving death had been the murder of the primal father who was later deified. But the murder was not remembered: instead of it there was a phantasy of its atonement, and for that reason this phantasy could be hailed as a message of redemption (*evangelium*). A son of God had allowed himself to be killed without guilt and had thus taken on himself the guilt of all men. It had to be a son, since it had been the murder of a father. It is probable that traditions from oriental and Greek mysteries had had an influence on the phantasy of redemption. What was essential in it seems to have been Paul's own contribution. In the most proper sense he was a man of an innately

[1] ['The Advance in Intellectuality' is the title of Section C of Part II of this essay (p. 111 below). The German word here translated 'intellectuality' is '*Geistigkeit*' and its rendering raises much difficulty. The obvious alternative would be 'spirituality', but in English this arouses some very different associations. The best plan, perhaps, is to examine Freud's own account of the concept in the Section just referred to and to form one's conclusions on that.]

religious disposition: the dark traces of the past lurked in his mind, ready to break through into its more conscious regions.

That the redeemer had sacrificed himself without guilt was evidently a tendentious distortion, which offered difficulties to logical understanding. For how could someone guiltless of the act of murder take on himself the guilt of the murderers by allowing himself to be killed? In the historical reality there was no such contradiction. The 'redeemer' could be none other than the most guilty person, the ringleader of the company of brothers who had overpowered their father. We must in my judgement leave it undecided whether there was such a chief rebel and ringleader. That is possible; but we must also bear in mind that each one of the company of brothers certainly had a wish to commit the deed by himself alone and so to create an exceptional position for himself and to find a substitute for his identification with the father which was having to be given up and which was becoming merged in the community. If there was no such ringleader, then Christ was the heir to a wishful phantasy which remained unfulfilled; if there was one, then he was his successor and his reincarnation. But no matter whether what we have here is a phantasy or the return of a forgotten reality, in any case the origin of the concept of a hero is to be found at this point the hero who always rebels against his father and kills him in some shape or other.[1] Here too is the true basis for the 'tragic guilt' of the hero of drama, which is otherwise hard to explain. It can scarcely be doubted that the hero and chorus in Greek drama represent the same rebellious hero and company of brothers; and it is not without significance that in the Middle Ages what the theatre started with afresh was the representation of the story of the Passion.

We have already said that the Christian ceremony of Holy Communion, in which the believer incorporates the Saviour's blood and flesh, repeats the content of the old totem meal no doubt only in its affectionate meaning, expressive of veneration, and not in its aggressive meaning. The ambivalence that dominates the relation to the father was clearly shown, however, in the final outcome of the religious novelty. Ostensibly aimed

[1] Ernest Jones has pointed out that the god Mithras, who kills the bull, might represent this ringleader boasting of his deed. It is well known for how long the worship of Mithras struggled with the young Christianity for the final victory.

at propitiating the father god, it ended in his being dethroned and got rid of. Judaism had been a religion of the father; Christianity became a religion of the son. The old God the Father fell back behind Christ; Christ, the Son, took his place, just as every son had hoped to do in primaeval times. Paul, who carried Judaism on, also destroyed it. No doubt he owed his success in the first instance to the fact that, through the idea of the redeemer, he exorcized humanity's sense of guilt; but he owed it as well to the circumstance that he abandoned the 'chosen' character of his people and its visible mark – circumcision – so that the new religion could be a universal one, embracing all men. Though a part may have been played in Paul's taking this step by his personal desire for revenge for the rejection of his innovation in Jewish circles, yet it also restored a feature of the old Aten religion – it removed a restriction which that religion had acquired when it was handed over to a new vehicle, the Jewish people.

In some respects the new religion meant a cultural regression as compared with the older, Jewish one, as regularly happens when a new mass of people, of a lower level, break their way in or are given admission. The Christian religion did not maintain the high level in things of the mind to which Judaism had soared. It was no longer strictly monotheist, it took over numerous symbolic rituals from surrounding peoples, it re-established the great mother-goddess and found room to introduce many of the divine figures of polytheism only lightly veiled, though in subordinate positions. Above all, it did not, like the Aten religion and the Mosaic one which followed it, exclude the entry of superstitious, magical and mystical elements, which were to prove a severe inhibition upon the intellectual development of the next two thousand years.

The triumph of Christianity was a fresh victory for the priests of Amun over Akhenaten's god after an interval of fifteen hundred years and on a wider stage. And yet in the history of religion – that is, as regards the return of the repressed – Christianity was an advance and from that time on the Jewish religion was to some extent a fossil.

It would be worth while to understand how it was that the monotheist idea made such a deep impression precisely on the Jewish people and that they were able to maintain it so tenaciously. It is possible, I think, to find an answer. Fate had

brought the great deed and misdeed of primaeval days, the killing of the father, closer to the Jewish people by causing them to repeat it on the person of Moses, an outstanding father-figure. It was a case of 'acting out' instead of remembering, as happens so often with neurotics during the work of analysis.[1] To the suggestion that they should remember, which was made to them by the doctrine of Moses, they reacted, however, by disavowing their action; they remained halted at the recognition of the great father and thus blocked their access to the point from which Paul was later to start his continuation of the primal history. It is scarcely a matter of indifference or of chance that the violent killing of another great man became the starting-point of Paul's new religious creation as well. This was a man whom a small number of adherents in Judaea regarded as the Son of God and as the Messiah who had been announced, and to whom, too, a part of the childhood story invented for Moses was later carried over [p. 14], but of whom in fact we know scarcely more with certainty than of Moses - whether he was really the great teacher portrayed by the Gospels or whether, rather, it was not the fact and circumstances of his death which were decisive for the importance which his figure acquired. Paul, who became his apostle, had not known him himself.

The killing of Moses by his Jewish people, recognized by Sellin from traces of it in tradition (and also, strange to say, accepted by the young Goethe without any evidence[2]) thus becomes an indispensable part of our construction, an important link between the forgotten event of primaeval times and its later emergence in the form of the monotheist religions.[3] It is plausible to conjecture that remorse for the murder of Moses provided the stimulus for the wishful phantasy of the Messiah, who was to return and lead his people to redemption and the promised world-dominion. If Moses was this first Messiah, Christ became his substitute and successor, and Paul could exclaim to the peoples with some historical justification: 'Look!

[1] [See Freud's technical paper 'Remembering, Repeating and Working-through' (1914*g*), *Standard Ed.*, **12**, 150 4.]

[2] 'Israel in der Wüste' ['Israel in the Wilderness']. In the Weimar Edition, **7**, 170.

[3] On this subject see Frazer's well-known discussions in Part III of *The Golden Bough* (*The Dying God*). [Frazer, 19...]

the Messiah has really come: he has been murdered before your eyes!' Then, too, there is a piece of historical truth in Christ's resurrection, for he was the resurrected Moses and behind him the returned primal father of the primitive horde, transfigured and, as the son, put in the place of the father.[1]

The poor Jewish people, who with their habitual stubbornness continued to disavow the father's murder, atoned heavily for it in the course of time. They were constantly met with the reproach 'You killed our God!' And this reproach is true, if it is correctly translated. If it is brought into relation with the history of religions, it runs: 'You will not *admit* that you murdered God (the primal picture of God, the primal father, and his later reincarnations).' There should be an addition declaring: 'We did the same thing, to be sure, but we have *admitted* it and since then we have been absolved.' Not all the reproaches with which anti-semitism persecutes the descendants of the Jewish people can appeal to a similar justification. A phenomenon of such intensity and permanence as the people's hatred of the Jews must of course have more than one ground. It is possible to find a whole number of grounds, some of them clearly derived from reality, which call for no interpretation, and others, lying deeper and derived from hidden sources, which might be regarded as the specific reasons. Of the former, the reproach of being aliens is perhaps the weakest, since in many places dominated by anti-semitism to-day the Jews were among the oldest portions of the population or had even been there before the present inhabitants. This applies, for instance, to the city of Cologne, to which the Jews came with the Romans, before it was occupied by the Germans.[2] Other grounds for hating the Jews are stronger thus, the circumstances that they live for the most part as minorities among other peoples, for the communal feeling of groups requires, in order to complete it, hostility towards some extraneous minority, and the numerical weakness of this excluded minority encourages its suppression. There are, however, two other char-

[1] [In *G.W.*, **16**, 196, the words 'the resurrected Moses and behind him' are omitted from this sentence.]

[2] [It will be recalled that in his *Autobiographical Study* (1925*d*), Freud mentions a tradition that his father's family were settled for a long time at Cologne (*Standard Ed.*, **20**, 7–8).]

acteristics of the Jews which are quite unforgivable. First is the fact that in some respects they are different from their 'host' nations. They are not fundamentally different, for they are not Asiatics of a foreign race, as their enemies maintain, but composed for the most part of remnants of the Mediterranean peoples and heirs of the Mediterranean civilization. But they are none the less different, often in an indefinable way different, especially from the Nordic peoples, and the intolerance of groups is often, strangely enough, exhibited more strongly against small differences than against fundamental ones.[1] The other point has a still greater effect: namely, that they defy all oppression, that the most cruel persecutions have not succeeded in exterminating them, and, indeed, that on the contrary they show a capacity for holding their own in commercial life and, where they are admitted, for making valuable contributions to every form of cultural activity.

The deeper motives for hatred of the Jews are rooted in the remotest past ages; they operate from the unconscious of the peoples, and I am prepared to find that at first they will not seem credible. I venture to assert that jealousy of the people which declared itself the first-born, favourite child of God the Father, has not yet been surmounted among other peoples even to-day: it is as though they had thought there was truth in the claim. Further, among the customs by which the Jews made themselves separate, that of circumcision has made a disagreeable, uncanny impression, which is to be explained, no doubt, by its recalling the dreaded castration and along with it a portion of the primaeval past which is gladly forgotten. And finally, as the latest motive in this series, we must not forget that all those peoples who excel to-day in their hatred of Jews became Christians only in late historic times, often driven to it by bloody coercion. It might be said that they are all 'misbaptized'. They have been left, under a thin veneer of Christianity, what their ancestors were, who worshipped a barbarous polytheism. They have not got over a grudge against the new religion which was imposed on them; but they have displaced the grudge on to the source from which Christianity reached them. The fact that the Gospels tell a story which is set among

[1] [Cf. 'the narcissism of minor differences', in Chapter V of *Civilization and its Discontents* (1930*a*), *Standard Ed.*, **21**, 114, where anti-semitism is also discussed.]

Jews, and in fact deals only with Jews, has made this displacement easy for them. Their hatred of Jews is at bottom a hatred of Christians, and we need not be surprised that in the German National-Socialist revolution this intimate relation between the two monotheist religions finds such a clear expression in the hostile treatment of both of them.[1]

E

Difficulties

Perhaps by what I have said I have succeeded in establishing the analogy between neurotic processes and religious events and in thus indicating the unsuspected origin of the latter. In this transference from individual to group psychology two difficulties arise, differing in their nature and importance, to which we must now turn.

The first of these is that we have here dealt with only a single instance from the copious phenomenology of religions and have thrown no light on any others. I must regretfully admit that I am unable to give more than this one example and that my expert knowledge is insufficient to complete the enquiry. From my limited information I may perhaps add that the case of the founding of the Mahommedan religion seems to me like an abbreviated repetition of the Jewish one, of which it emerged as an imitation. It appears, indeed, that the Prophet intended originally to accept Judaism completely for himself and his people. The recapture of the single great primal father brought the Arabs an extraordinary exaltation of their self-confidence, which led to great worldly successes but exhausted itself in them. Allah showed himself far more grateful to his chosen people than Yahweh did to his. But the internal development

[1] [Freud seems to have first mentioned the unconscious root of anti-semitism in the castration complex and circumcision in a footnote to his 'Little Hans' case history (1909*b*), *Standard Ed.*, **10**, 36 *n.* He repeated the point in a footnote added in 1919 to his study of Leonardo (1910*c*), ibid., **11**, 95-6 *n.* A reference to anti-semitism in *Civilization and its Discontents* has been mentioned above (p. 9.) in an Editor's footnote. The present discussion, is, however, much more elaborate than any of these. The subject was once again the topic of Freud's short contribution to a Paris periodical (1938*a*), which appears below (p. 291).]

of the new religion soon came to a stop, perhaps because it lacked the depth which had been caused in the Jewish case by the murder of the founder of their religion. The apparently rationalistic religions of the East are in their core ancestor-worship and so come to a halt, too, at an early stage of the reconstruction of the past. If it is true that in primitive peoples of to-day the recognition of a supreme being is the only content of their religion, we can only regard this as an atrophy of religious development and bring it into relation with the countless cases of rudimentary neuroses which are to be observed in the other field. Why it is that in the one case just as in the other things have gone no further, our knowledge is in both cases insufficient to tell us. We can only attribute the responsibility to the individual endowment of these peoples, the direction taken by their activity and their general social condition. Moreover, it is a good rule in the work of analysis to be content to explain what is actually before one and not to seek to explain what has *not* happened.

The second difficulty about this transference to group psychology is far more important, because it poses a fresh problem of a fundamental nature. It raises the question in what form the operative tradition in the life of peoples is present — a question which does not occur with individuals, since there it is solved by the existence in the unconscious of memory-traces of the past. Let us return to our historical example. We have attributed the compromise at Kadesh to the survival of a powerful tradition among those who had returned from Egypt. This case involves no problem. According to our theory, a tradition of this kind was based on conscious memories of oral communications which people then living had received from their ancestors only two or three generations back who had themselves been participants and eye-witnesses of the events in question. But can we believe the same thing of the later centuries — that the tradition still had its basis in a knowledge normally handed on from grandfather to grandchild? It is no longer possible to say, as it was in the earlier case, who the people were who preserved this knowledge and handed it on by word of mouth. According to Sellin the tradition of the murder of Moses was always in the possession of priestly circles till eventually it found expression in writing which alone enabled Sellin to discover it. But it can only have been known to a few people; it was not public property.

And is that enough to explain its effect? Is it possible to attribute to knowledge held like this by a few people the power to produce such a lasting emotion in the masses when it came to their notice? It seems, rather, as though there must have been something present in the ignorant masses, too, which was in some way akin to the knowledge of the few and went half way to meet it when it was uttered.

A decision is made still more difficult when we turn to the analogous case in primaeval times. It is quite certain that in the course of thousands of years the fact was forgotten that there had been a primal father with the characteristics we know and what his fate had been; nor can we suppose that there was any oral tradition of it, as we can in the case of Moses. In what sense, then, does a tradition come in question at all? In what form can it have been present?

In order to make it easier for readers who do not desire or are not prepared to plunge into a complicated psychological state of affairs, I will anticipate the outcome of the investigation that is to follow. In my opinion there is an almost complete conformity in this respect between the individual and the group: in the group too an impression of the past is retained in unconscious memory-traces.

In the case of the individual we believe we can see clearly. The memory-trace of his early experience has been preserved in him, but in a special psychological condition. The individual may be said to have known it always, just as one knows about the repressed. Here we have formed ideas, which can be confirmed without difficulty through analysis, of how something can be forgotten and how it can then reappear after a while. What is forgotten is not extinguished but only 'repressed'; its memory-traces are present in all their freshness, but isolated by 'anticathexes'. They cannot enter into communication with other intellectual processes; they are unconscious—inaccessible to consciousness. It may also be that certain portions of the repressed, having evaded the process [of repression], remain accessible to memory and occasionally emerge into consciousness; but even so they are isolated, like foreign bodies out of connection with the rest. It may be so, but it need not be so; repression may also be complete, and it is with that alternative that we shall deal in what follows.

The repressed retains its upward urge, its effort to force its way to consciousness. It achieves its aim under three conditions: (1) if the strength of the anticathexis is diminished by pathological processes which overtake the other part [of the mind], what we call the ego, or by a different distribution of the cathectic energies in that ego, as happens regularly in the state of sleep; (2) if the instinctual elements attaching to the repressed receive a special reinforcement (of which the best example is the processes during puberty); and (3) if at any time in recent experience impressions or experiences occur which resemble the repressed so closely that they are able to awaken it. In the last case the recent experience is reinforced by the latent energy of the repressed, and the repressed comes into operation behind the recent experience and with its help. In none of these three alternatives does what has hitherto been repressed enter consciousness smoothly and unaltered; it must always put up with distortions which testify to the influence of the resistance (not entirely overcome) arising from the anticathexis, or to the modifying influence of the recent experience or to both.

The difference between whether a psychical process is conscious or unconscious has served us as a criterion and a means of finding our bearings. The repressed is unconscious. Now it would simplify things agreeably if this sentence admitted of reversal—if, that is, the difference between the qualities of conscious (*Cs.*) and unconscious (*Ucs.*) coincided with the distinction between 'belonging to the ego' and 'repressed'.[1] The fact of there being isolated and unconscious things like this in our mental life would be sufficiently novel and important. But in reality the position is more complicated. It is true that everything repressed is unconscious, but it is not true that

[1] [It may be remarked that these abbreviations make their final appearance here after a long interval. Apart from a couple of occurrences in Lecture XXXI of the *New Introductory Lectures* (1933*a*), *Standard Ed.*, **22**, 71–2, they had fallen entirely out of use since the structural account of the mind was established some fifteen years earlier in *The Ego and the Id* (1923*b*), where a full discussion of them is given in the Editor's Introduction, *Standard Ed.*, **19**, 4 ff. It is a curious fact that in the present work they are used, quite contrary to Freud's normal practice, in a 'descriptive' sense. These abbreviations are in fact also used in the manuscript of the *Outline of Psycho-Analysis* (1940*a*). Abbreviations of all kinds are however especially frequent in that manuscript and the work, of course, was not seen by Freud in print.]

everything belonging to the ego is conscious. We notice that consciousness is a transient quality which attaches to a psychical process only in passing. For our purposes therefore we must replace 'conscious' by 'capable of being conscious' and we call this quality 'preconscious' (*Pcs.*). We then say, more correctly, that the ego is mainly preconscious (virtually conscious) but that portions of the ego are unconscious.

The establishment of this latter fact shows us that the qualities on which we have hitherto relied are insufficient to give us our bearings in the obscurity of mental life. We must introduce another distinction which is no longer qualitative but *topographical* and — what gives it special value — at the same time *genetic*. We now distinguish in our mental life (which we regard as an apparatus compounded of several agencies, districts or provinces) one region which we call the *ego* proper and another which we name the *id*. The id is the older of the two; the ego has developed out of it, like a cortical layer, through the influence of the external world. It is in the id that all our primary instincts are at work, all the processes in the id take place unconsciously. The ego, as we have already said, coincides with the region of the preconscious; it includes portions which normally remain unconscious. The course of events in the id, and their mutual interaction, are governed by quite other laws than those prevailing in the ego. It is in fact the discovery of these differences that has led to our new view and justifies it.

The *repressed* is to be counted as belonging to the id and is subject to the same mechanisms; it is distinguished from it only in respect to its genesis. The differentiation is accomplished in the earliest period of life, while the ego is developing out of the id. At that time a portion of the contents of the id is taken into the ego and raised to the preconscious state; another portion is not affected by this translation and remains behind in the id as the unconscious proper. In the further course of the formation of the ego, however, certain psychical impressions and processes in the ego are excluded [i.e. expelled] from it by a defensive process; the characteristic of being preconscious is withdrawn from them, so that they are once more reduced to being component portions of the id. Here then is the 'repressed' in the id. So far as intercourse between the two mental provinces is concerned, we therefore assume that, on the one hand, unconscious processes in the id are raised to the level of the preconscious and

incorporated into the ego, and that, on the other hand, preconscious material in the ego can follow the opposite path and be put back into the id. The fact that later on a special region — that of the 'super-ego' — is separated off in the ego lies outside our present interest.[1]

All of this may appear to be far from simple.[2] But when one has grown reconciled to this unusual spatial view of the mental apparatus, it can present no particular difficulties to the imagination. I will add the further comment that the psychical topography that I have developed here has nothing to do with the anatomy of the brain, and actually only touches it at one point.[3] What is unsatisfactory in this picture — and I am aware of it as clearly as anyone — is due to our complete ignorance of the *dynamic* nature of the mental processes. We tell ourselves that what distinguishes a conscious idea from a preconscious one, and the latter from an unconscious one, can only be a modification, or perhaps a different distribution, of psychical energy. We talk of cathexes and hypercathexes, but beyond this we are without any knowledge on the subject or even any starting-point for a serviceable working hypothesis. Of the phenomenon of consciousness we can at least say that it was originally attached to perception. All sensations which originate from the perception of painful, tactile, auditory or visual stimuli are what are most readily conscious. Thought-processes, and whatever may be analogous to them in the id, are in themselves unconscious and obtain access to consciousness by becoming linked to the mnemic residues of visual and auditory perceptions along the path of the function of speech.[4] In animals, which lack speech, these conditions must be of a simpler kind.

The impressions of early traumas, from which we started out, are either not translated into the preconscious or are quickly

[1] [Some discussion of the super-ego will however be found below (p. 116 f.).]

[2] [A fuller account is given in Lecture XXXI of the *New Introductory Lectures* (1933*a*).]

[3] [This single point, as Freud explains in parallel accounts in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* (1920*g*), *Standard Ed.*, **18**, 24 and *The Ego and the Id* (1923*b*), ibid., **19**, 19, lies in the perceptual system, which is regarded as cortical both in anatomy and in Freud's metapsychology.]

[4] [For a long technical discussion of this see Part VII of the metapsychological paper on 'The Unconscious' (1915*e*), *Standard Ed.*, **14**, 201 ff.]

put back by repression into the id-condition. Their mnemic residues are in that case unconscious and operate from the id. We believe we can easily follow their further vicissitudes so long as it is a question of what has been experienced by the subject himself. But a fresh complication arises when we become aware of the probability that what may be operative in an individual's psychical life may include not only what he has experienced himself but also things that were innately present in him at his birth, elements with a phylogenetic origin — an *archaic heritage*. The questions then arise of what this consists in, what it contains and what is the evidence for it.

The immediate and most certain answer is that it consists in certain [innate] dispositions such as are characteristic of all living organisms: in the capacity and tendency, that is, to enter particular lines of development and to react in a particular manner to certain excitations, impressions and stimuli. Since experience shows that there are distinctions in this respect between individuals of the human species, the archaic heritage must include these distinctions; they represent what we recognize as the *constitutional* factor in the individual. Now, since all human beings, at all events in their early days, have approximately the same experiences, they react to them, too, in a similar manner; a doubt was therefore able to arise whether we should not include these reactions, along with their individual distinctions, in the archaic heritage. This doubt should be put on one side. our knowledge of the archaic heritage is not enlarged by the fact of this similarity.

Nevertheless, analytic research has brought us a few results which give us cause for thought. There is, in the first place, the universality of symbolism in language. The symbolic representation of one object by another – the same thing applies to actions —is familiar to all our children and comes to them, as it were, as a matter of course. We cannot show in regard to them how they have learnt it and must admit that in many cases learning it is impossible. It is a question of an original knowledge which adults afterwards forget. It is true that an adult makes use of the same symbols in his dreams, but he does not understand them unless an analyst interprets them to him, and even then he is reluctant to believe the translation. If he makes use of one of the very common figures of speech in which this symbolism is recorded, he is obliged to admit that its true sense has com-

pletely escaped him. Moreover, symbolism disregards differences of language; investigations would probably show that it is ubiquitous the same for all peoples. Here, then, we seem to have an assured instance of an archaic heritage dating from the period at which language developed. But another explanation might still be attempted. It might be said that we are dealing with thought-connections between ideas—connections which had been established during the historical development of speech and which have to be repeated now every time the development of speech has to be gone through in an individual. It would thus be a case of the inheritance of an intellectual disposition similar to the ordinary inheritance of an instinctual disposition and once again it would be no contribution to our problem.

The work of analysis has, however, brought something else to light which exceeds in its importance what we have so far considered. When we study the reactions to early traumas, we are quite often surprised to find that they are not strictly limited to what the subject himself has really experienced but diverge from it in a way which fits in much better with the model of a phylogenetic event and, in general, can only be explained by such an influence. The behaviour of neurotic children towards their parents in the Oedipus and castration complex abounds in such reactions, which seem unjustified in the individual case and only become intelligible phylogenetically by their connection with the experience of earlier generations. It would be well worth while to place this material, which I am able to appeal to here, before the public in a collected form. Its evidential value seems to me strong enough for me to venture on a further step and to posit the assertion that the archaic heritage of human beings comprises not only dispositions but also subject-matter—memory-traces of the experience of earlier generations. In this way the compass as well as the importance of the archaic heritage would be significantly extended.

On further reflection I must admit that I have behaved for a long time as though the inheritance of memory-traces of the experience of our ancestors, independently of direct communication and of the influence of education by the setting of an example, were established beyond question. When I spoke of the survival of a tradition among a people or of the formation

of a people's character, I had mostly in mind an inherited tradition of this kind and not one transmitted by communication. Or at least I made no distinction between the two and was not clearly aware of my audacity in neglecting to do so. My position, no doubt, is made more difficult by the present attitude of biological science, which refuses to hear of the inheritance of acquired characters by succeeding generations. I must, however, in all modesty confess that nevertheless I cannot do without this factor in biological evolution. The same thing is not in question, indeed, in the two cases: in the one it is a matter of acquired characters which are hard to grasp, in the other of memory-traces of external events—something tangible, as it were. But it may well be that at bottom we cannot imagine one without the other.

If we assume the survival of these memory-traces in the archaic heritage, we have bridged the gulf between individual and group psychology: we can deal with peoples as we do with an individual neurotic. Granted that at the time we have no stronger evidence for the presence of memory-traces in the archaic heritage than the residual phenomena of the work of analysis which call for a phylogenetic derivation, yet this evidence seems to us strong enough to postulate that such is the fact. If it is not so, we shall not advance a step further along the path we entered on, either in analysis or in group psychology. The audacity cannot be avoided.

And by this assumption we are effecting something else. We are diminishing the gulf which earlier periods of human arrogance had torn too wide apart between mankind and the animals. If any explanation is to be found of what are called the instincts[1] of animals, which allow them to behave from the first in a new situation in life as though it were an old and familiar one—if any explanation at all is to be found of this instinctive life of animals, it can only be that they bring the experiences of their species with them into their own new existence—that is, that they have preserved memories of what was experienced by their ancestors. The position in the human animal would not at bottom be different. His own archaic heritage corresponds to the instincts of animals even though it is different in its compass and contents.

[1] [Here and in the remainder of this paragraph the German word is '*Instinkt*' and not '*Trieb*'. Similarly on p. 133 below.]

After this discussion I have no hesitation in declaring that men have always known (in this special way) that they once possessed a primal father and killed him.

Two further questions must now be answered. First, under what conditions does a memory of this kind enter the archaic heritage? And, secondly, in what circumstances can it become active—that is, can it advance to consciousness from its unconscious state in the id, even though in an altered and distorted shape? The answer to the first question is easy to formulate: the memory enters the archaic heritage if the event was important enough, or repeated often enough, or both. In the case of parricide both conditions are fulfilled. On the second question there is this to be said. A whole number of influences may be concerned, not all of which are necessarily known. A spontaneous development is also conceivable, on the analogy of what happens in some neuroses. What is certainly of decisive importance, however, is the awakening of the forgotten memory-trace by a recent real repetition of the event. The murder of Moses was a repetition of this kind and, later, the supposed judicial murder of Christ: so that these events come into the foreground as causes. It seems as though the genesis of monotheism could not do without these occurrences. We are reminded of the poet's words:

> Was unsterblich im Gesang soll leben,
> Muss im Leben untergehn.[1]

And lastly a remark which brings up a psychological argument. A tradition that was based only on communication could not lead to the compulsive character that attaches to religious phenomena. It would be listened to, judged, and perhaps dismissed, like any other piece of information from outside; it would never attain the privilege of being liberated from the constraint of logical thought. It must have undergone the fate of being repressed, the condition of lingering in the unconscious, before it is able to display such powerful effects on its return, to bring the masses under its spell, as we have seen with astonishment and hitherto without comprehension in the case of religious tradition. And this consideration weighs heavily in

[1] [Literally: 'What is to live immortal in song must perish in life.'] Schiller, 'Die Götter Griechenlands'.

favour of our believing that things really happened in the way we have tried to picture them or at least in some similar way.[1]

[1] [The discussion of the 'archaic heritage' in this section is by far the longest in Freud's writings. The question of the relative parts played in mental life by heredity and experience was, of course, a repeated topic for discussion from the earliest times. But this particular point of the possibility of the inheritance of actual ancestral experiences had appeared relatively late in Freud's writings. The problem of the transmission of ancestral experiences was necessarily raised in *Totem and Taboo* (1912–13), 'What are the ways and means', Freud asks there, 'employed by one generation in order to hand on its mental states to the next one?' (*Standard Ed.*, **13**, 158.) His reply in this passage is non-committal, though he seems to suggest that the process can be accounted for by conscious and unconscious communication from one generation to another. But it is not difficult to see that even then he had other ideas at the back of his mind. Indeed, the possibility of the inheritance of an 'archaic constitution' as an atavistic vestige is explicitly mentioned there in connection with ambivalence (ibid., **13**, 69), and, in this same connection, the term '*archaisches Erbteil*' (translated 'archaic inheritance') appears in 'Instincts and their Vicissitudes' (1915*c*), ibid., **14**, 131. It seems probable that these ideas were precipitated (like so much else) in connection with the 'Wolf Man' analysis and particularly with the topic of 'primal phantasies'. This analysis was actually in progress while Freud was writing *Totem and Taboo* and his first draft of the case history was written in 1914. The possibility of a 'phylogenetic heritage' had, however, also arisen in connection with symbolism. This question was discussed somewhat allusively in Lecture X of the *Introductory Lectures*, *Standard Ed.*, **15**, 165–6, and more explicitly in a sentence near the beginning of Lecture XIII, ibid., 199. The first definite reference to the inheritance of primal phantasies seems to have been in Lecture XXIII of the *Introductory Lectures* (1917), *Standard Ed.*, **16**, 371, but it was further developed in one of the passages added after this to the 'Wolf Man' case history (*Standard Ed.*, **17**, 97). The actual term '*archaische Erbschaft*' seems to appear for the first time in 1919—in a paragraph added in that year to Chapter VII (B) of *The Interpretation of Dreams*, *Standard Ed.*, **5**, 548–9, in 'A Child is Being Beaten', ibid., **17**, 193 and in Freud's preface to Reik's book on religious origins, ibid., **17**, 262. Thereafter the concept and the term appear frequently, though only in Chapter III of *The Ego and the Id* is the subject discussed at any length (ibid., **19**, 36–8). A late reference to the question will be found in Section VI of 'Analysis Terminable and Interminable' (1937*c*), p. 240 below.) The whole question of Freud's views on the inheritance of acquired characters is discussed by Ernest Jones in Chapter 10 of Vol. III of his Life of Freud (1957).]

PART II

Summary and Recapitulation

The part of this study which follows cannot be given to the public without extensive explanations and apologies. For it is nothing other than a faithful (and often word-for-word) repetition of the first part [of the third Essay], abbreviated in some of its critical enquiries and augmented by additions relating to the problem of how the special character of the Jewish people arose. I am aware that a method of exposition such as this is no less inexpedient than it is inartistic. I myself deplore it unreservedly. Why have I not avoided it? The answer to that is not hard for me to find, but it is not easy to confess. I found myself unable to wipe out the traces of the history of the work's origin, which was in any case unusual.

Actually it has been written twice: for the first time a few years ago in Vienna, where I did not think it would be possible to publish it. I determined to give it up; but it tormented me like an unlaid ghost, and I found a way out by making two pieces of it independent and publishing them in our periodical *Imago*: the psycho-analytic starting-point of the whole thing 'Moses an Egyptian' [Essay I], and the historical construction erected on this 'If Moses was an Egyptian . . .' [Essay II]. The remainder, which included what was really open to objection and dangerous—the application [of these findings] to the genesis of monotheism and the view of religion in general—I held back, as I thought, for ever. Then, in March 1938, came the unexpected German invasion, which forced me to leave my home but also freed me from my anxiety lest my publication might conjure up a prohibition of psycho-analysis in a place where it was still tolerated. I had scarcely arrived in England before I found the temptation irresistible to make the knowledge I had held back accessible to the world, and I began to revise the third part of my study to fit it on to the two parts that had already been published. This naturally involved a partial rearrangement of the material. I did not succeed, however, in including the whole of this material in my second version; on the other hand I could not make up my mind to give up the

earlier versions entirely. And so it has come about that I have adopted the expedient of attaching a whole piece of the first presentation to the second unchanged - which has brought with it the disadvantage of involving extensive repetition.

I might, however, console myself with the reflection that the things I am treating are in any case so new and so important, apart from how far my account of them is correct, that it can be no misfortune if the public is obliged to read the same thing about them twice over. There are things which should be said more than once and which cannot be said often enough. But the reader must decide of his own free will whether to linger over the subject or to come back to it. He must not be surreptitiously led into having the same thing put before him twice in one book. It is a piece of clumsiness for which the author must take the blame. Unluckily an author's creative power does not always obey his will: the work proceeds as it can, and often presents itself to the author as something independent or even alien.[1]

[1] [Freud had said something similar at rather greater length near the beginning of Lecture XXIV of the *Introductory Lectures*, *Standard Ed.*, **16**, 379.]

A

The People of Israel

If we are clear in our mind that a procedure like ours of accepting what seems to us serviceable in the material presented to us and of rejecting what does not suit us and of putting the different pieces together in accordance with psychological probability—if we are clear that a technique of this kind can give no certainty that we shall arrive at the truth, then it may justly be asked why we are undertaking this work at all. The answer is an appeal to the work's outcome. If we greatly tone down the strictness of the requirements made upon a historico-psychological investigation, it will perhaps be possible to throw light on problems which have always seemed to deserve attention and which recent events have forced upon our observation anew. As we know, of all the peoples who lived round the basin of the Mediterranean in antiquity, the Jewish people is almost the only one which still exists in name and also in substance. It has met misfortunes and ill-treatment with an unexampled capacity for resistance; it has developed special character-traits and incidentally has earned the hearty dislike of every other people. We should be glad to understand more of the source of this viability of the Jews and of how their characteristics are connected with their history.

We may start from a character-trait of the Jews which dominates their relation to others. There is no doubt that they have a particularly high opinion of themselves, that they regard themselves as more distinguished, of higher standing, as superior to other peoples from whom they are also distinguished by many of their customs.[1] At the same time they are inspired by a peculiar confidence in life, such as is derived from the secret ownership of some precious possession, a kind of optimism: pious people would call it trust in God.

We know the reason for this behaviour and what their secret

[1] The aspersion, so common in antiquity, that the Jews were 'lepers' (cf. Manetho [*History of Egypt*, English translation, 1940, 119 ff.], no doubt has the sense of a projection: 'they keep as much apart from us as though we were lepers.'

treasure is. They really regard themselves as God's chosen people, they believe that they stand especially close to him; and this makes them proud and confident. Trustworthy reports tell us that they behaved in Hellenistic times just as they do to-day, so that the complete Jew was already there; and the Greeks, among whom and alongside of whom they lived, reacted to the Jewish characteristics in the same way as their 'hosts' do to-day. It might be thought that they reacted as though they too believed in the superiority which the people of Israel claimed for themselves. If one is the declared favourite of the dreaded father, one need not be surprised at the jealousy of one's brothers and sisters, and the Jewish legend of Joseph and his brethren shows very well where this jealousy can lead. The course of world-history seemed to justify the presumption of the Jews, since, when later on it pleased God to send mankind a Messiah and redeemer, he once again chose him from the Jewish people. The other peoples might have had occasion then to say to themselves: 'Indeed, they were right, they *are* God's chosen people.' But instead of this, what happened was that redemption by Jesus Christ only intensified their hatred of the Jews, while the Jews themselves gained no advantage from this second act of favouritism, since they did not recognize the redeemer.

On the basis of our earlier discussions, we may now assert that it was the man Moses who imprinted this trait significant for all time upon the Jewish people. He raised their self-esteem by assuring them that they were God's chosen people, he enjoined them to holiness [p. 120] and pledged them to be apart from others. Not that other peoples were lacking in self-esteem. Just as to-day, so in those days each nation thought itself better than any other. But the self-esteem of the Jews was given a religious anchorage by Moses: it became a part of their religious faith. Owing to their especially intimate relation to their God they acquired a share in his grandeur. And since we know that behind the God who had chosen the Jews and freed them from Egypt stands the figure of Moses, who had done precisely that, ostensibly at God's command, we venture to declare that it was this one man Moses who created the Jews. It is to him that this people owes its tenacity of life but also much of the hostility it has experienced and still experiences.

B

The Great Man

How is it possible for a single man to evolve such extraordinary effectiveness that he can form a people out of random individuals and families, can stamp them with their definitive character and determine their fate for thousands of years? Is not a hypothesis such as this a relapse into the mode of thought which led to myths of a creator and to the worship of heroes, into times in which the writing of history was nothing more than a report of the deeds and destinies of single individuals, of rulers or conquerors? The modern tendency is rather towards tracing back the events of human history to more concealed, general and impersonal factors, to the compelling influence of economic conditions, to alterations in food habits, to advances in the use of materials and tools, to migrations brought about by increases in population and climatic changes. Individuals have no other part to play in this than as exponents or representatives of group trends, which are bound to find expression and do so in these particular individuals largely by chance.

These are perfectly justifiable lines of approach, but they give us occasion for drawing attention to an important discrepancy between the attitude taken up by our organ of thought and the arrangement of things in the world, which are supposed to be grasped by means of our thought. It is enough for our need to discover causes (which, to be sure, is imperative) if each event has *one* demonstrable cause.[1] But in the reality lying outside us that is scarcely the case; on the contrary, each event seems to be overdetermined and proves to be the effect of several convergent causes. Frightened by the immense complication of events, our investigations take the side of one correlation as against another and set up contradictions which do not exist but have only arisen owing to a rupture of more comprehensive

[1] [Freud had made this point before in the third of his *Five Lectures* (1910*a*), *Standard Ed.*, **11**, 38.—The fact of multiple causation was constantly insisted on by him from early times. See, for instance, Chapter IV, Section 1, of *Studies on Hysteria* (1895*d*), *Standard Ed.*, **2**, 263.]

relations.[1] Accordingly, if the investigation of a particular case demonstrates to us the transcendent influence of a single personality, our conscience need not reproach us with having by this hypothesis flown in the face of the doctrine of the importance of the general and impersonal factors. There is room in principle for both. In the case of the genesis of monotheism, however, we can point to no external factor other than the one we have already mentioned – that this development was linked with the establishment of closer relations between different nations and with the building up of a great empire.

Thus we reserve a place for 'great men' in the chain, or rather the network, of causes. But it may not, perhaps, be quite useless to enquire under what conditions we confer this title of honour. We shall be surprised to find that it is never quite easy to answer this question. A first formulation – 'we do so if a man possesses to a specially high degree qualities that we value greatly' – clearly misses the mark in every respect. Beauty, for instance, and muscular strength, however enviable they may be, constitute no claim to 'greatness'. It would seem, then, that the qualities have to be mental ones – psychical and intellectual distinctions. As regards these, we are held up by the consideration that nevertheless we should not unhesitatingly describe someone as a great man simply because he was extraordinarily efficient in some particular sphere. We should certainly not do so in the case of a chess master or of a virtuoso on a musical instrument; but not very easily, either, in the case of a distinguished artist or scientist. In such cases we should naturally speak of him as a great poet, painter, mathematician or physicist, or as a pioneer in the field of this or that activity; but we refrain from pronouncing him a great man. If we unhesitatingly declare that, for instance, Goethe and Leonardo da Vinci and Beethoven were great men, we must be led to it by something other than admiration for their splendid creations. If precisely such examples as these did not stand in the way, the idea would probably occur to us that the name of a 'great man'

[1] I protest, however, against being misunderstood to say that the world is so complicated that any assertion one may make is bound to hit upon a piece of truth somewhere. No. Our thought has upheld its liberty to discover dependent relations and connections to which there is nothing corresponding in reality; and it clearly sets a very high value on this gift, since it makes such copious use of it both inside and outside of science.

is preferably reserved for men of action—conquerors, generals, rulers—and is in recognition of the greatness of their achievement, the force of the effects to which they gave rise. But this too is unsatisfactory and is entirely contradicted by our condemnation of so many worthless figures whose effects upon their contemporary world and upon posterity can nevertheless not be disputed. Nor shall we be able to choose success as a sign of greatness, when we reflect on the majority of great men who instead of achieving success have perished in misfortune.

For the moment, then, we are inclined to decide that it is not worth while to look for a connotation of the concept of a 'great man' that is unambiguously determined. It seems to be only a loosely used and somewhat arbitrarily conferred recognition of an over-large development of certain human qualities, with some approximation to the original literal sense of 'greatness'. We must recollect, too, that we are not so much interested in the essence of great men as in the question of the means by which they affect their fellow-men. We will, however, keep this enquiry as short as possible, since it threatens to lead us far away from our goal.

Let us, therefore, take it for granted that a great man influences his fellow-men in two ways: by his personality and by the idea which he puts forward. That idea may stress some ancient wishful image of the masses, or it may point out a new wishful aim to them, or it may cast its spell over them in some other way. Occasionally and this is undoubtedly the more primary case the personality works by itself and the idea plays a quite trivial part. Not for a moment are we in the dark as to why a great man ever becomes important. We know that in the mass of mankind there is a powerful need for an authority who can be admired, before whom one bows down, by whom one is ruled and perhaps even ill-treated. We have learnt from the psychology of individual men what the origin is of this need of the masses. It is a longing for the father felt by everyone from his childhood onwards, for the same father whom the hero of legend boasts he has overcome. And now it may begin to dawn on us that all the characteristics with which we equipped the great man are paternal characteristics, and that the essence of great men for which we vainly searched lies in this conformity. The decisiveness of thought, the strength of will, the energy of action are part of the picture of a father—but above all the autonomy

and independence of the great man, his divine unconcern which may grow into ruthlessness. One must admire him, one may trust him, but one cannot avoid being afraid of him too. We should have been led to realize this from the word itself: who but the father can have been the 'great man' in childhood?[1]

There is no doubt that it was a mighty prototype of a father which, in the person of Moses, stooped to the poor Jewish bondsmen to assure them that they were his dear children. And no less overwhelming must have been the effect upon them of the idea of an only, eternal, almighty God, to whom they were not too mean for him to make a covenant with them and who promised to care for them if they remained loyal to his worship. It was probably not easy for them to distinguish the image of the man Moses from that of his God; and their feeling was right in this, for Moses may have introduced traits of his own personality into the character of his God—such as his wrathful temper and his relentlessness. And if, this being so, they killed their great man one day, they were only repeating a misdeed which in ancient times had been committed, as prescribed by law, against the Divine King and which, as we know, went back to a still more ancient prototype.[2]

If on the one hand we thus see the figure of the great man grown to divine proportions, yet on the other hand we must recall that the father too was once a child. The great religious idea for which the man Moses stood was, on our view, not his own property: he had taken it over from King Akhenaten. And he, whose greatness as the founder of a religion is unequivocally established, may perhaps have been following hints which had reached him from near or distant parts of Asia through the medium of his mother[3] or by other paths.

We cannot follow the chain of events further, but if we have rightly recognized these first steps, the monotheist idea returned like a boomerang to the land of its origin. Thus it seems unfruitful to try to fix the credit due to an individual in connection with a new idea. It is clear that many have shared in its

[1] [In German '*der grosse Mann*' means not only 'the great man' but 'the tall man' or 'the big man'.]

[2] Cf. Frazer, loc. cit. [See p. 89, footnote 3.]

[3] [The theory held at one time, that Akhenaten's mother, Queen Tiye, was of foreign origin, has been abandoned in view of the discovery of her parents' tomb at Thebes.]

development and made contributions to it. And, again, it would obviously be unjust to break off the chain of causes at Moses and to neglect what was effected by those who succeeded him and carried on his ideas, the Jewish Prophets. The seed of monotheism failed to ripen in Egypt. The same thing might have happened in Israel after the people had thrown off the burdensome and exacting religion. But there constantly arose from the Jewish people men who revived the fading tradition, who renewed the admonitions and demands made by Moses, and who did not rest till what was lost had been established once again. In the course of constant efforts over centuries, and finally owing to two great reforms, one before and one after the Babylonian exile, the transformation was accomplished of the popular god Yahweh into the God whose worship had been forced upon the Jews by Moses. And evidence of the presence of a peculiar psychical aptitude in the masses who had become the Jewish people is revealed by the fact that they were able to produce so many individuals prepared to take on the burdens of the religion of Moses in return for the reward of being the chosen people and perhaps for some other prizes of a similar degree.

C

The Advance in Intellectuality[1]

In order to bring about lasting psychical results in a people, it is clearly not enough to *assure* them that they have been chosen by the deity. The fact must also be *proved* to them in some way if they are to believe it and to draw consequences from the belief. In the religion of Moses the Exodus from Egypt served as the proof; God, or Moses in his name, was never tired of appealing to this evidence of favour. The feast of the Passover was introduced in order to maintain the memory of that event, or, rather, an old-established feast was injected with the contents of that memory. Nevertheless, it was only a memory: the

[1] [This Section, as has been mentioned in the Editor's Note, p. 3, appeared first separately in *Int. Z. Psychoan. Imago*, **24** (1939), 6–9. Two variants from the final version are noted below. For a discussion of the English rendering of the title see the footnote on p. 86 above.]

Exodus belonged to a hazy past. In the present, signs of God's favour were decidedly scanty; the people's history pointed rather to his *dis*favour. Primitive peoples used to depose their gods or even to castigate them, if they failed to do their duty in securing them victory, happiness and comfort. In all periods kings have been treated in no way differently from gods; an ancient identity is thus revealed: an origin from a common root. Thus, modern peoples, too, are in the habit of expelling their kings if the glory of their reign is spoilt by defeats and the corresponding losses in territory and money. Why the people of Israel, however, clung more and more submissively to their God the worse they were treated by him –that is a problem which for the moment we must leave on one side.

It may encourage us to enquire whether the religion of Moses brought the people nothing else besides an enhancement of their self-esteem owing to their consciousness of having been chosen. And indeed another factor can easily be found. That religion also brought the Jews a far grander conception of God, or, as we might put it more modestly, the conception of a grander God. Anyone who believed in this God had some kind of share in his greatness, might feel exalted himself. For an unbeliever this is not entirely self-evident; but we may perhaps make it easier to understand if we point to the sense of superiority felt by a Briton in a foreign country which has been made insecure owing to an insurrection – a feeling that is completely absent in a citizen of any small continental state. For the Briton counts on the fact that his Government[1] will send along a warship if a hair of his head is hurt, and that the rebels understand that very well –whereas the small state possesses no warship at all. Thus, pride in the greatness of the British Empire[2] has a root as well in the consciousness of the greater security – the protection—enjoyed by the individual Briton. This may resemble the conception of a grand God. And, since one can scarcely claim to assist God in the administration of the world, the pride in God's greatness fuses with the pride in being chosen by him.

Among the precepts of the Moses religion there is one that is of greater importance than appears to begin with. This is the prohibition against making an image of God—the compulsion

[1] [In English in the original.]
[2] [Also in English.]

to worship a God whom one cannot see.[1] In this, I suspect, Moses was outdoing the strictness of the Aten religion. Perhaps he merely wanted to be consistent: his God would in that case have neither a name nor a countenance. Perhaps it was a fresh measure against magical abuses.[2] But if this prohibition were accepted, it must have a profound effect. For it meant that a sensory perception was given second place to what may be called an abstract idea – a triumph of intellectuality over sensuality or, strictly speaking, an instinctual renunciation, with all its necessary psychological consequences.

This may not seem obvious at first sight, and before it can carry conviction we must recall other processes of the same character in the development of human civilization. The earliest of these and perhaps the most important is merged in the obscurity of primaeval ages. Its astonishing effects compel us to assert its occurrence. In our children, in adults who are neurotic, as well as in primitive peoples, we meet with the mental phenomenon which we describe as a belief in the 'omnipotence of thoughts'. In our judgement this lies in an over-estimation of the influence which our mental (in this case, intellectual) acts can exercise in altering the external world. At bottom, all magic, the precursor of our technology, rests on this premiss. All the magic of words, too, has its place here, and the conviction of the power which is bound up with the knowledge and pronouncing of a name. The 'omnipotence of thoughts' was, we suppose, an expression of the pride of mankind in the development of speech, which resulted in such an extraordinary advancement of intellectual activities. The new realm of intellectuality was opened up, in which ideas, memories and inferences became decisive in contrast to the lower psychical activity which had direct perceptions by the sense-organs as its content. This was unquestionably one of the most important stages on the path to hominization [p. 75 *n.* 1].

We can far more easily grasp another process of a later date. Under the influence of external factors into which we need not enter here and which are also in part insufficiently known, it came about that the matriarchal social order was succeeded by the patriarchal one – which, of course, involved a revolution

[1] [Cf. pp. 25–6 above.]

[2] [Cf. a remark on this in *Totem and Taboo* (1912–13), *Standard Ed.*, **13**, 80 *n.*]

in the juridical conditions that had so far prevailed. An echo of this revolution seems still to be audible in the *Oresteia* of Aeschylus.[1] But this turning from the mother to the father points in addition to a victory of intellectuality over sensuality—that is, an advance in civilization, since maternity is proved by the evidence of the senses while paternity is a hypothesis, based on an inference and a premiss. Taking sides in this way with a thought-process in preference to a sense perception has proved to be a momentous step.

At some point between the two events that I have mentioned[2] there was another which shows the most affinity to what we are investigating in the history of religion. Human beings found themselves obliged in general to recognise 'intellectual [*geistige*]' forces—forces, that is, which cannot be grasped by the senses (particularly by the sight, but which none the less produce undoubted and indeed extremely powerful effects. If we may rely upon the evidence of language, it was movement of the air that provided the prototype of intellectuality [*Geistigkeit*], for intellect [*Geist*] derives its name from a breath of wind—'*animus*', '*spiritus*',[3] and the Hebrew '*ruach* (breath)'. This too led to the discovery of the mind [*Seele* (soul,)] as that of the intellectual [*geistigen*] principle in individual human beings. Observation found the movement of air once again in men's breathing, which ceases when they die. To this day a dying man 'breathes out his spirit [*Seele*]'. Now, however, the world of spirits [*Geisterreich*] lay open to men. They were prepared to attribute the soul [*Seele*] which they had discovered in themselves to everything in Nature. The whole world was animate [*beseelt*]; and science, which came so much later, had plenty to do in divesting part of the world of its soul once more; indeed it has not completed that task even to-day.[4]

The Mosaic prohibition elevated God to a higher degree of

[1] [The theme of this trilogy is the murder of Agamemnon by his wife Clytemnestra, the vengeance taken on her by their son Orestes, his pursuit by the Furies and his trial and acquittal by the Court of the Areopagus in Athens.]

[2] [Between the development of speech and the end of the matriarchy.]

[3] [In the original version of this section (see p. 111 *n*) the Greek word 'ἄνεμος (anemos, wind)' appears here as well.]

[4] [It will have been seen that this last paragraph is untranslatable. 'Geist' means not only 'intellect' but 'spirit' and 'soul'. 'Seele' means 'soul', 'spirit' and 'mind'.]

intellectuality, and the way was opened to further alterations in the idea of God which we have still to describe. But we may first consider another effect of the prohibition. All such advances in intellectuality have as their consequence that the individual's self-esteem is increased, that he is made proud—so that he feels superior to other people who have remained under the spell of sensuality. Moses, as we know, conveyed to the Jews an exalted sense of being a chosen people. The dematerialization of God brought a fresh and valuable contribution to their secret treasure. The Jews retained their inclination to intellectual interests. The nation's political misfortune taught it to value at its true worth the one possession that remained to it—its literature. Immediately after the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem by Titus, the Rabbi Jochanan ben Zakkai asked permission to open the first Torah school in Jabneh.[1] From that time on, the Holy Writ and intellectual concern with it were what held the scattered people together.

This much is generally known and accepted. All I have wanted to do is to add that this characteristic development of the Jewish nature was introduced by the Mosaic prohibition against worshipping God in a visible form.

The pre-eminence given to intellectual labours throughout some two thousand years in the life of the Jewish people has, of course, had its effect. It has helped to check the brutality and the tendency to violence which are apt to appear where the development of muscular strength is the popular ideal. Harmony in the cultivation of intellectual and physical activity, such as was achieved by the Greek people, was denied to the Jews. In this dichotomy their decision was at least in favour of the worthier alternative.[2]

[1] [He is reputed to have escaped from Jerusalem in a coffin, and to have obtained leave from the Roman general to start a college for instruction in the Law (*Torah*) at a town near the sea to the west of Jerusalem (A.D. 70).]

[2] [In the original version (see p. 111 *n*.) 'the alternative that was more significant culturally.']

D

Renunciation of Instinct

It is not obvious and not immediately understandable why an advance in intellectuality, a set-back to sensuality, should raise the self-regard both of an individual and of a people. It seems to presuppose the existence of a definite standard of value and of some other person or agency which maintains it. For an explanation let us turn to an analogous case in individual psychology which we have come to understand.

If the id in a human being gives rise to an instinctual demand of an erotic or aggressive nature, the simplest and most natural thing is that the ego, which has the apparatus of thought and the muscular apparatus at its disposal, should satisfy the demand by an action. This satisfaction of the instinct is felt by the ego as pleasure, just as its non-satisfaction would undoubtedly have become a source of unpleasure. Now a case may arise in which the ego abstains from satisfying the instinct in view of external obstacles—namely, if it perceives that the action in question would provoke a serious danger to the ego. An abstention from satisfaction of this kind, the renunciation of an instinct on account of an external hindrance—or, as we say, in obedience to the reality principle—is not pleasurable in any event. The renunciation of the instinct would lead to a lasting tension owing to unpleasure, if it were not possible to reduce the strength of the instinct itself by displacements of energy. Instinctual renunciation can, however, also be imposed for other reasons, which we correctly describe as *internal*. In the course of an individual's development a portion of the inhibiting forces in the external world are internalized and an agency is constructed in the ego which confronts the rest of the ego in an observing, criticizing and prohibiting sense. We call this new agency the *super-ego*. Thenceforward the ego, before putting to work the instinctual satisfactions demanded by the id, has to take into account not merely the dangers of the external world but also the objections of the super-ego, and it will have all the more grounds for abstaining from satisfying the instinct. But whereas instinctual renunciation, when it is for external reasons, is *only* unpleasurable, when it is for internal reasons, in obedi-

ence to the super-ego, it has a different economic effect. In addition to the inevitable unpleasurable consequences it also brings the ego a yield of pleasure—a substitutive satisfaction, as it were. The ego feels elevated, it is proud of the instinctual renunciation, as though it were a valuable achievement. We believe we can understand the mechanism of this yield of pleasure. The super-ego is the successor and representative of the individual's parents (and educators) who had supervised his actions in the first period of his life; it carries on their functions almost unchanged. It keeps the ego in a permanent state of dependence and exercises a constant pressure on it. Just as in childhood, the ego is apprehensive about risking the love of its supreme master, it feels his approval as liberation and satisfaction and his reproaches as pangs of conscience. When the ego has brought the super-ego the sacrifice of an instinctual renunciation, it expects to be rewarded by receiving more love from it. The consciousness of deserving this love is felt by it as pride. At the time when the authority had not yet been internalized as a super-ego, there could be the same relation between the threat of loss of love and the claims of instinct: there was a feeling of security and satisfaction when one had achieved an instinctual renunciation out of love for one's parents. But this happy feeling could only assume the peculiar narcissistic character of pride after the authority had itself become a portion of the ego.

What help does this explanation of the satisfaction arising from instinctual renunciation give us towards understanding the processes that we want to study—the elevation of self-regard when there are advances in intellectuality? Very little, it seems. The circumstances are quite different. There is no question of any instinctual renunciation and there is no second person or agency for whose sake the sacrifice is made. We shall soon feel doubts about this last assertion. It can be said that the great man is precisely the authority for whose sake the achievement is carried out; and, since the great man himself operates by virtue of his similarity to the father, there is no need to feel surprise if in group psychology the role of the super-ego falls to him. So that this would apply too to the man Moses in relation to the Jewish people. As regards the other point, however, no proper analogy can be established. An advance in intellectuality consists in deciding against direct sense-perception in favour of what are known as the higher intellectual processes—that is, memories,

reflections and inferences. It consists, for instance, in deciding that paternity is more important than maternity, although it cannot, like the latter, be established by the evidence of the senses, and that for that reason the child should bear his father's name and be his heir. Or it declares that our God is the greatest and mightiest, although he is invisible like a gale of wind or like the soul. The rejection of a sexual or aggressive instinctual demand seems to be something quite different from this. Moreover, in the case of some advances in intellectuality — for instance, in the case of the victory of patriarchy — we cannot point to the authority which lays down the standard which is to be regarded as higher. It cannot in this case be the father, since he is only elevated into being an authority by the advance itself. Thus we are faced by the phenomenon that in the course of the development of humanity sensuality is gradually overpowered by intellectuality and that men feel proud and exalted by every such advance. But we are unable to say why this should be so. It further happens later on that intellectuality itself is overpowered by the very puzzling emotional phenomenon of faith. Here we have the celebrated '*credo quia absurdum*',[1] and, once more, anyone who has succeeded in this regards it as a supreme achievement. Perhaps the common element in all these psychological situations is something else. Perhaps men simply pronounce that what is more difficult is higher, and their pride is merely their narcissism augmented by the consciousness of a difficulty overcome.

These are certainly not very fruitful considerations, and it might be thought that they have nothing at all to do with our enquiry as to what has determined the character of the Jewish people. That would only be to our advantage; but a certain connection with our problem is betrayed nevertheless by a fact which will concern us still more later on. The religion which began with the prohibition against making an image of God develops more and more in the course of centuries into a religion of instinctual renunciations. It is not that it would demand sexual *abstinence*; it is content with a marked restriction of sexual freedom. God, however, becomes entirely removed from sexuality and elevated into the ideal of ethical perfection. But ethics is a limitation of instinct. The Prophets are never tired of asseverating that God requires nothing other from his

[1] [See footnote p. 85 above.]

people than a just and virtuous conduct of life—that is, abstention from every instinctual satisfaction which is still condemned as vicious by our morality to-day as well. And even the demand for belief in him seems to take a second place in comparison with the seriousness of these ethical requirements. In this way instinctual renunciation seems to play a prominent part in the religion, even if it did not stand out in it from the first.

This is the place, however, for an interpolation, in order to avoid a misunderstanding. Even though it may seem that instinctual renunciation and the ethics founded on it do not form part of the essential content of religion, yet genetically they are most intimately connected with it. Totemism,[1] which is the earliest form of a religion which we recognize, carries with it, as indispensable constituents of its system, a number of commands and prohibitions which have no other significance, of course, than as instinctual renunciations: the worship of the totem, which includes a prohibition against injuring or killing it, exogamy—that is, renunciation of the passionately desired mothers and sisters in the horde; the granting of equal rights to all the members of the fraternal alliance—that is, restricting the inclination to violent rivalry among them. In these regulations are to be seen the first beginnings of a moral and social order. It does not escape us that two different motives are at work here. The first two prohibitions operate on the side of the father who has been got rid of: they carry on his will, as it were. The third command—the granting of equal rights to the allied brothers—disregards the father's will; it is justified by an appeal to the necessity for permanently maintaining the new order which succeeded the father's removal. Otherwise a relapse into the earlier state would have become inevitable. It is here that social commands diverge from the others which, as we might say, are derived directly from religious connections.

The essential part of this course of events is repeated in the abbreviated development of the human individual. Here, too, it is the authority of the child's parents—essentially, that of his autocratic father, threatening him with his power to punish—which calls on him for a renunciation of instinct and which decides for him what is to be allowed and what forbidden. Later on, when Society and the super-ego have taken the parents' place, what in the child was called 'well-behaved' or

[1] [Cf. above p. 81 ff.]

'naughty' is described as 'good' and 'evil' or 'virtuous' and 'vicious'. But it is still always the same thing instinctual renunciation under the pressure of the authority which replaces and prolongs the father.

A further depth is added to these discoveries when we examine the remarkable concept of holiness. What is it really that seems to us 'holy' in preference to other things that we value highly and recognize as important?[1] On the one hand, the connection of holiness or sacredness with what is religious is unmistakable. It is insisted upon emphatically everything religious is sacred, it is the very core of sacredness. On the other hand, our judgement is disturbed by the numerous attempts to apply the characteristic of sacredness to so many other things—people, institutions, functions—which have little to do with religion. These efforts serve obvious tendentious purposes. Let us start from the prohibitive character which is so firmly attached to sacredness. What is sacred is obviously something that may not be touched. A sacred prohibition has a very strong emotional tone but has in fact no rational basis. For why, for instance, should incest with a daughter or sister be such a specially serious crime so much worse than any other sexual intercourse?[2] If we ask for a rational basis we shall certainly be told that all our feelings rebel against it. But that only means that people regard the prohibition as self-evident and that they know of no basis for it.

It is easy enough to show the futility of such an explanation. What is represented as insulting our most sacred feelings was a universal custom –we might call it a usage made holy among the ruling families of the Ancient Egyptians and of other early peoples. It was taken as a matter of course that a Pharaoh

[1] [The word '*heilig*', here translated either 'sacred' or 'holy', was discussed by Freud somewhat differently in his paper on '"Civilized" Sexual Morality and Modern Nervous Illness' [1908*d*], *Standard Ed.*, **9**, 184–7. The gist of this latter argument is already to be seen in a remarkable short paragraph headed 'Definition of "Holiness"' in a communication sent by Freud to Fliess on May 31st, 1897 [Freud, 1950*a*, Draft N]. The word '*heilig*' appears also, as applied to *persons* in the sense of 'saintly', in Chapter VII of *Civilization and its Discontents* [1930*a*], *Standard Ed.*, **21**, 126. The wider aspects of the present topic are also considered in the same chapter. See especially, ibid., 125–30.]

[2] [The 'horror of incest' is the subject of the first Essay in *Totem and Taboo*, (1912–13).]

should take his sister as his first and principal wife; and the later successors of the Pharaohs, the Greek Ptolemies, did not hesitate to follow that model. We are compelled, rather, to a realization that incest—in this instance between a brother and sister—was a privilege which was withheld from common mortals and reserved to kings as representatives of the gods, just as similarly, no objection was taken to incestuous relations of this kind in the world of Greek and Germanic legend. It may be suspected that the scrupulous insistence upon equality of birth among our aristocracy is a relic of this ancient privilege and it can be established that, as a result of the inbreeding practised over so many generations in the highest social strata, Europe is ruled to-day by members of a single family and a second one.

Evidence of incest among gods, kings and heroes helps us as well to deal with another attempt, which seeks to explain the horror of incest biologically and to trace it to an obscure knowledge of the damage done by inbreeding. It is not even certain, however, that there is any danger of damage from inbreeding—let alone that primitive peoples can have recognized it and reacted against it. The uncertainty in defining the permitted and forbidden degrees of kinship argues just as little in favour of the hypothesis that a 'natural feeling' is the ultimate basis of the horror of incest.

Our construction of prehistory forces us to another explanation. The command in favour of exogamy, of which the horror of incest is the negative expression, was a product of the will of the father and carried this will on after he had been removed. Hence come the strength of its emotional tone and the impossibility of finding a rational basis for it—that is, its sacredness. We confidently expect that an investigation of all the other cases of a sacred prohibition would lead to the same conclusion as in that of the horror of incest: that what is sacred was originally nothing other than the prolongation of the will of the primal father. This would also throw light on the hitherto incomprehensible ambivalence of the words which express the concept of sacredness. It is the ambivalence which in general dominates the relation to the father. [The Latin] '*sacer*' means not only 'sacred', 'consecrated', but also something that we can only translate as 'infamous', 'detestable' (e.g. '*auri sacra fames*').[1]

[1] ['Execrable hunger for gold.' Virgil, *Aeneid*, VI, 816. Cf. 'The Antithetical Meaning of Primal Words' (1910e), *Standard Ed.*, 11, 159.]

But the father's will was not only something which one might not touch, which one had to hold in high respect, but also something one trembled before, because it demanded a painful instinctual renunciation. When we hear that Moses made his people holy [p. 30] by introducing the custom of circumcision we now understand the deep meaning of that assertion. Circumcision is the symbolic substitute for the castration which the primal father once inflicted upon his sons in the plenitude of his absolute power, and whoever accepted that symbol was showing by it that he was prepared to submit to the father's will, even if it imposed the most painful sacrifice on him.

Going back to ethics, we may say in conclusion that a part of its precepts are justified rationally by the necessity for delimiting the rights of society as against the individual, the rights of the individual as against society and those of individuals as against one another. But what seems to us so grandiose about ethics, so mysterious and, in a mystical fashion, so self-evident, owes these characteristics to its connection with religion, its origin from the will of the father.

E

What is True in Religion

How enviable, to those of us who are poor in faith, do those enquirers seem who are convinced of the existence of a Supreme Being! To that great Spirit the world offers no problems, for he himself created all its institutions. How comprehensive, how exhaustive and how definitive are the doctrines of believers compared with the laborious, paltry and fragmentary attempts at explanation which are the most we are able to achieve! The divine Spirit, which is itself the ideal of ethical perfection, has planted in men the knowledge of that ideal and, at the same time, the urge to assimilate their own nature to it. They perceive directly what is higher and nobler and what is lower and more base. Their affective life is regulated in accordance with their distance from the ideal at any moment. When they approach to it—at their perihelion, as it were—they are brought high satisfaction; when, at their aphelion, they have become remote from it, the punishment is severe unpleasure. All of this is laid

down so simply and so unshakably. We can only regret that certain experiences in life and observations in the world make it impossible for us to accept the premiss of the existence of such a Supreme Being. As though the world had not riddles enough, we are set the new problem of understanding how these other people have been able to acquire their belief in the Divine Being and whence that belief obtained its immense power, which overwhelms 'reason and science'.[1]

Let us return to the more modest problem which has occupied us hitherto. We wanted to explain the origin of the special character of the Jewish people, a character which is probably what has made their survival to the present day possible. We found that the man Moses impressed this character on them by giving them a religion which increased their self-esteem so much that they thought themselves superior to all other peoples. Thereafter they survived by keeping apart from others. Mixtures of blood interfered little with this, since what held them together was an ideal factor, the possession in common of certain intellectual and emotional wealth. The religion of Moses led to this result because (1) it allowed the people to take a share in the grandeur of a new idea of God, (2) it asserted that this people had been chosen by this great God and were destined to receive evidences of his special favour and (3) it forced upon the people an advance in intellectuality which, important enough in itself, opened the way, in addition, to the appreciation of intellectual work and to further renunciations of instinct.

This is what we have arrived at. And, though we do not wish to take back any of it, we cannot hide from ourselves that it is somehow or other unsatisfying. The cause does not, so to speak, match the effect; the fact that we want to explain seems to be of a different order of magnitude from everything by which we explain it. May it be that all the investigations we have so far made have not uncovered the whole of the motivation but only a certain superficial layer, and that behind it another very important factor awaits discovery? In view of the extraordinary complexity of all causation in life and history, something of the sort was to be expected.

Access to this deeper motivation would seem to be given at a

[1] [An allusion to an ironical remark by Mephistopheles in *Faust*, Part I, Scene 4.]

particular point in the previous discussions. The religion of Moses did not produce its effects immediately but in a remarkably indirect manner. This does not mean to say simply that it did not work at once, that it took long periods of time, hundreds of years, to deploy its full effect, for that is self-evident when it is a question of the imprinting of a people's character. But the restriction relates to a fact which we have derived from the history of the Jewish religion or, if you like, have introduced into it. We have said that after a certain time the Jewish people rejected the religion of Moses once more—whether they did so completely or retained some of its precepts we cannot guess. If we suppose that in the long period of the seizure of Canaan and the struggle with the peoples inhabiting it the Yahweh religion did not differ essentially from the worship of the other Baalim [p. 69], we shall be on historical ground in spite of all the later tendentious efforts to throw a veil over this shaming state of things.

The religion of Moses, however, had not disappeared without leaving a trace. A kind of memory of it had survived, obscured and distorted, supported, perhaps, among individual members of the priestly caste by ancient records. And it was this tradition of a great past which continued to work in the background, as it were, which gradually gained more and more power over men's minds, and which finally succeeded in transforming the god Yahweh into the god of Moses and in calling back to life the religion of Moses which had been established and then abandoned long centuries earlier.

In a previous portion of this study [Sections C, D and E of Part I, p. 72 ff.] we have considered what assumption seems inevitable if we are to find such an achievement of tradition comprehensible.

F

The Return of the Repressed

There are a quantity of similar processes among those which the analytic investigation of mental life has taught us to know. Some of them are described as pathological, others are counted among the diversity of normal events. But that matters little,

since the boundaries between the two [the pathological and the normal] are not sharply drawn, their mechanisms are to a large extent the same, and it is of far more importance whether the alterations in question take place in the ego itself or whether they confront it as alien to it—in which case they are known as symptoms.

From the mass of material I shall first bring forward some cases which relate to the development of character. Take, for instance, the girl who has reached a state of the most decided opposition to her mother. She has cultivated all those characteristics which she has seen that her mother lacked, and has avoided everything that reminded her of her mother. We may supplement this by saying that in her early years, like every female child, she adopted an identification with her mother and that she is now rebelling against this energetically. But when this girl marries and herself becomes a wife and a mother, we need not be surprised to find that she begins to grow more and more like the mother to whom she was so antagonistic, till finally the identification with her which she surmounted is unmistakably re-established. The same thing happens too with boys; and even the great Goethe, who in the period of his genius certainly looked down upon his unbending and pedantic father, in his old age developed traits which formed a part of his father's character. The outcome can become even more striking when the contrast between the two personalities is sharper. A young man whose fate it was to grow up beside a worthless father, began by developing, in defiance of him, into a capable, trustworthy and honourable person. In the prime of life his character was reversed, and thenceforward he behaved as though he had taken this same father as a model. In order not to miss the connection with our theme, we must keep in mind the fact that at the beginning of such a course of events there is always an identification with the father in early childhood. This is afterwards repudiated, and even overcompensated, but in the end establishes itself once more.

It has long since become common knowledge that the experiences of a person's first five years exercise a determining effect on his life, which nothing later can withstand. Much that deserves knowing might be said about the way in which these early impressions maintain themselves against any influences in more mature periods of life—but it would not be relevant here.

It may, however, be less well known that the strongest compulsive influence arises from impressions which impinge upon a child at a time when we would have to regard his psychical apparatus as not yet completely receptive. The fact itself cannot be doubted; but it is so puzzling that we may make it more comprehensible by comparing it with a photographic exposure which can be developed after any interval of time and transformed into a picture. I am nevertheless glad to point out that this uncomfortable discovery of ours has been anticipated by an imaginative writer, with the boldness that is permitted to poets. E. T. A. Hoffmann used to trace back the wealth of figures that put themselves at his disposal for his creative writings to the changing images and impressions which he had experienced during a journey of some weeks in a post-chaise while he was still an infant at his mother's breast.[1] What children have experienced at the age of two and have not understood, need never be remembered by them except in dreams; they may only come to know of it through psycho-analytic treatment. But at some later time it will break into their life with obsessional impulses, it will govern their actions, it will decide their sympathies and antipathies and will quite often determine their choice of a love-object, for which it is so frequently impossible to find a rational basis. The two points at which these facts touch upon our problem cannot be mistaken.

First, there is the remoteness of the period concerned,[2] which is recognized here as the truly determining factor—in the special state of the memory, for instance, which in the case of these childhood experiences we classify as 'unconscious'. We expect to find an analogy in this with the state which we are seeking to attribute to tradition in the mental life of the people. It was not easy, to be sure, to introduce the idea of the unconscious into group psychology.

Regular contributions [secondly] are made to the phenomena we are in search of by the mechanisms which lead to the formation of neuroses. Here again the determining events occur

[1] [The source of this reference has not been discovered.]

[2] Here, too, a poet may speak. In order to explain his attachment, he imagines 'Ach du warst in abgelebten Zeiten meine Schwester oder meine Frau' [Literally 'Ah, you were, in a past life, my sister or my wife.' From a poem dedicated by Goethe to Charlotte von Stein: 'Warum gabst du uns die tiefen Blicke.' Freud had quoted it in his Goethe House address (1930*e*), *Standard Ed.*, **21**, 209.]

in early childhood times, but here the stress is not upon the *time* but upon the process by which the event is met, the reaction to it. We can describe it schematically thus. As a result of the experience, an instinctual demand arises which calls for satisfaction. The ego refuses that satisfaction, either because it is paralysed by the magnitude of the demand or because it recognizes it as a danger. The former of these grounds is the more primary one, both of them amount to the avoidance of a situation of danger.[1] The ego fends off the danger by the process of repression. The instinctual impulse is in some way inhibited, its precipitating cause, with its attendant perceptions and ideas, is forgotten. This, however, is not the end of the process: the instinct has either retained its forces, or collects them again, or it is reawakened by some new precipitating cause. Thereupon it renews its demand, and, since the path to normal satisfaction remains closed to it by what we may call the scar of repression, somewhere, at a weak spot, it opens another path for itself to what is known as a substitutive satisfaction, which comes to light as a symptom, without the acquiescence of the ego, but also without its understanding. All the phenomena of the formation of symptoms may justly be described as the 'return of the repressed'.[2] Their distinguishing characteristic, however, is the far-reaching distortion to which the returning material has been subjected as compared with the original. It will perhaps be thought that this last group of facts has carried us too far away from the similarity with tradition. But we ought not to regret it if it has brought us close to the problems of the renunciation of instinct.

G

Historical Truth

We have undertaken all these psychological diversions in order to make it more credible to us that the religion of Moses only carried through its effect on the Jewish people as a

[1] [For 'situations of danger' see Addendum B in Chapter XI of *Inhibitions, Symptoms and Anxiety* (1926*d*), *Standard Ed.*, **20**, 164 ff.]

[2] [The term, as well as the concept, go back at least to Freud's second paper on the neuro-psychoses of defence (1896*b*), *Standard Ed.*, **3**, 170.]

tradition. It is likely that we have not achieved more than a certain degree of probability. Let us suppose, however, that we have succeeded in completely proving it. Even so the impression would remain that we have merely satisfied the *qualitative* factor of what was demanded, but not the quantitative one as well. There is an element of grandeur about everything to do with the origin of a religion, certainly including the Jewish one, and this is not matched by the explanations we have hitherto given. Some other factor must be involved to which there is little that is analogous and nothing that is of the same kind, something unique and something of the same order of magnitude as what has come out of it, as religion itself. [Cf. p. 123 above.]

Let us try to approach the subject from the opposite direction. We understand how a primitive man is in need of a god as creator of the universe, as chief of his clan, as personal protector. This god takes his position behind the dead fathers [of the clan], about whom tradition still has something to say. A man of later days, of our own day, behaves in the same way. He, too, remains childish and in need of protection, even when he is grown up; he thinks he cannot do without support from his god. That much is undisputed. But it is less easy to understand why there may only be a *single* god, why precisely the advance from henotheism[1] to monotheism acquires an overwhelming significance. No doubt it is true, as we have explained [pp. 106 and 123], that the believer has a share in the greatness of his god, and the greater the god the more reliable is the protection which he can offer. But a god's power does not necessarily presuppose that he is the only one. Many peoples regarded it only as a glorification of their chief god if he ruled over other deities who were inferior to him, and they did not think it diminished his greatness if there were other gods besides him. No doubt, if this god became a universal one and had all countries and peoples as his concern, it meant a sacrifice of intimacy, too. It was as though one were sharing one's god with the foreigners and one had to make up for this by the proviso that one was preferred by him. We can make the further point that the idea of a single

[1] The word has not been very clearly defined. It is used to mean the belief that a community's more particular god is its only god, but also to mean the belief in the dominance of one particular god over a hierarchy of other gods. In neither case does the belief imply that the god in question is the *only* god.]

god means in itself an advance in intellectuality, but it is impossible to rate this point so highly.

Pious believers, however, know how to fill this obvious gap in motivation adequately. They say that the idea of a single god produced such an overwhelming effect on men because it is a portion of the eternal *truth* which, long concealed, came to light at last and was then bound to carry everyone along with it. We must admit that a factor of this kind is at last something that matches the magnitude both of the subject and of its effect.

We too would like to accept this solution. But we are brought up by a doubt. The pious argument rests on an optimistic and idealistic premiss. It has not been possible to demonstrate in other connections that the human intellect has a particularly fine flair for the truth or that the human mind shows any special inclination for recognizing the truth. We have rather found, on the contrary, that our intellect very easily goes astray without any warning, and that nothing is more easily believed by us than what, without reference to the truth, comes to meet our wishful illusions. We must for that reason add a reservation to our agreement. We too believe that the pious solution contains the truth — but the *historical* truth and not the *material* truth. And we assume the right to correct a certain distortion to which this truth has been subjected on its return. That is to say, we do not believe that there is a single great god to-day, but that in primaeval times there was a single person who was bound to appear huge at that time and who afterwards returned in men's memory elevated to divinity.

We had assumed that the religion of Moses was to begin with rejected and half-forgotten and afterwards broke through as a tradition. We are now assuming that this process was being repeated then for the second time. When Moses brought the people the idea of a single god, it was not a novelty but signified the revival of an experience in the primaeval ages of the human family which had long vanished from men's conscious memory. But it had been so important and had produced or paved the way for such deeply penetrating changes in men's life that we cannot avoid believing that it had left behind it in the human mind some permanent traces, which can be compared to a tradition.

We have learnt from the psycho-analyses of individuals that

their earliest impressions, received at a time when the child was scarcely yet capable of speaking, produce at some time or another effects of a compulsive character without themselves being consciously remembered. We believe we have a right to make the same assumption about the earliest experiences of the whole of humanity. One of these effects would be the emergence of the idea of a single great god—an idea which must be recognized as a completely justified memory, though, it is true, one that has been distorted. An idea such as this has a compulsive character: it *must* be believed. To the extent to which it is distorted, it may be described as a *delusion*, in so far as it brings a return of the past, it must be called the *truth*. Psychiatric delusions, too, contain a small fragment of truth and the patient's conviction extends over from this truth on to its delusional wrappings.[1]

What follows, from here to the end, is a slightly modified repetition of the discussions in Part I [of the present third essay].

In 1912 I attempted, in my *Totem and Taboo*, to reconstruct the ancient situation from which these consequences followed. In doing so, I made use of some theoretical ideas put forward

[1] [The notion contained in this last sentence had been expressed by Freud in very similar terms in the first edition of *The Psychopathology of Everyday Life* (1901*b*), *Standard Ed.*, **6**, 256. Similarly in *Gradiva* (1907*a*), ibid., **9**, 80. The matter was investigated more deeply in Section B of the paper on 'Some Neurotic Mechanisms' (1922*b*), ibid., **18**, 225 ff.; but the general idea can be followed much further back to the second paper on the neuro-psychoses of defence (1896*b*), ibid., **3**, 183 ff. and to passages in the Fliess correspondence dating from January 24, 1897 and January 1, 1896 (Freud, 1950*a*, Letter 57 and the section on paranoia in Draft K).—The related distinction drawn in this section between 'historical' and 'material' truth is of much more recent origin. There may be a hint of it in *The Future of an Illusion* (1927*c*), ibid., **21**, 44 and there is a more definite allusion to it in connection with myths in the paper on the acquisition of fire (1932*a*), ibid., **22**, 191. But the first explicit reference is in the 'Postscript' to the *Autobiographical Study* (1935*a*), ibid., **20**, 72, where, oddly enough, the idea is introduced as being already before the world, though in fact it was not put in print before 'Constructions in Analysis' (1937*d*), p. 257 ff. above. The subject has already been touched upon above, pp. 98 and 100. For a reference to a possibly analogous distinction between psychical and external reality see p. 76 above.]

by Darwin, Atkinson and particularly by Robertson Smith, and combined them with the findings and indications derived from psycho-analysis. From Darwin I borrowed the hypothesis that human beings originally lived in small hordes, each of which was under the despotic rule of an older male who appropriated all the females and castigated or disposed of the younger males, including his sons. From Atkinson I took, in continuation of this account, the idea that this patriarchal system ended in a rebellion by the sons, who banded together against their father, overcame him and devoured him in common. Basing myself on Robertson Smith's totem theory, I assumed that subsequently the father-horde gave place to the totemic brother-clan. In order to be able to live in peace with one another, the victorious brothers renounced the women on whose account they had, after all, killed their father, and instituted exogamy. The power of fathers was broken and the families were organized as a matriarchy. The ambivalent emotional attitude of the sons to their father remained in force during the whole of later development. A particular animal was set up in the father's place as a totem. It was regarded as ancestor and protective spirit and might not be injured or killed. But once a year the whole male community came together to a ceremonial meal at which the totem animal (worshipped at all other times) was torn to pieces and devoured in common. No one might absent himself from this meal. It was the ceremonial repetition of the killing of the father, with which social order, moral laws and religion had taken their start. The conformity between Robertson Smith's totem meal and the Christian Lord's Supper had struck a number of writers before me. [See above, pp. 81–4.]

To this day I hold firmly to this construction. I have repeatedly met with violent reproaches for not having altered my opinions in later editions of my book in spite of the fact that more recent ethnologists have unanimously rejected Robertson Smith's hypotheses and have in part brought forward other, totally divergent theories. I may say in reply that these ostensible advances are well known to me. But I have not been convinced either of the correctness of these innovations or of Robertson Smith's errors. A denial is not a refutation, an innovation is not necessarily an advance. Above all, however, I am not an ethnologist but a psycho-analyst. I had a right to take out of ethnological literature what I might need for the work of analysis.

The writings of Robertson Smith – a man of genius – have given me valuable points of contact with the psychological material of analysis and indications for its employment. I have never found myself on common ground with his opponents.

II

The Historical Development

I cannot here repeat the contents of *Totem and Taboo* in greater detail. But I must undertake to fill up the long stretch between that hypothetical primaeval period and the victory of monotheism in historical times. After the institution of the combination of brother-clan, matriarchy, exogamy and totemism, a development began which must be described as a slow 'return of the repressed'. Here I am not using the term 'the repressed' in its proper sense. What is in question is something in a people's life which is past, lost to view, superseded and which we venture to compare with what is repressed in the mental life of an individual. We cannot at first sight say in what form this past existed during the time of its eclipse. It is not easy for us to carry over the concepts of individual psychology into group psychology; and I do not think we gain anything by introducing the concept of a 'collective' unconscious. The content of the unconscious, indeed, is in any case a collective, universal property of mankind. For the moment, then, we will make shift with the use of analogies. The processes in the life of peoples which we are studying here are very similar to those familiar to us in psychopathology, but nevertheless not quite the same. We must finally make up our minds to adopt the hypothesis that the psychical precipitates of the primaeval period became inherited property which, in each fresh generation, called not for acquisition but only for awakening. In this we have in mind the example of what is certainly the 'innate' symbolism which derives from the period of the development of speech, which is familiar to all children without their being instructed, and which is the same among all peoples despite their different languages. What we may perhaps still lack in certainty here is made good by other products of psycho-analytic research. We find that in a number of important relations our children react, not in a manner cor-

responding to their own experience, but instinctively, like the animals, in a manner that is only explicable as phylogenetic acquisition.[1]

The return of the repressed took place slowly and certainly not spontaneously but under the influence of all the changes in conditions of life which fill the history of human civilization. I cannot give a survey here of these determinants nor more than a fragmentary enumeration of the stages of this return. The father once more became the head of the family, but was not by any means so absolute as the father of the primal horde had been. The totem animal was replaced by a god in a series of transitions which are still very plain. To begin with, the god in human form still bore an animal's head, later he turned himself by preference into that particular animal, and afterwards it became sacred to him and was his favourite attendant, or he killed the animal and himself bore its name as an epithet. Between the totem animal and the god, the hero emerged, often as a preliminary step towards deification. The idea of a supreme deity seems to have started early, at first only in a shadowy manner without intruding into men's daily interests. As tribes and peoples came together into larger unities, the gods too organized themselves into families and into hierarchies. One of them was often elevated into being supreme lord over gods and men. After this, the further step was hesitatingly taken of paying respect to only one god, and finally the decision was taken of giving all power to a single god and of tolerating no other gods beside him. Only thus was it that the supremacy of the father of the primal horde was re-established and that the emotions relating to him could be repeated.

The first effect of meeting the being who had so long been missed and longed for was overwhelming and was like the traditional description of the law-giving from Mount Sinai. Admiration, awe and thankfulness for having found grace in his eyes – the religion of Moses knew none but these positive feelings towards the father-god. The conviction of his irresistibility, the submission to his will, could not have been more unquestioning in the helpless and intimidated son of the father of the horde –

[1] [What Freud has in mind here are no doubt chiefly the 'primal phantasies'. See the Editor's footnote on the 'archaic heritage' p. 182 above). The word translated here 'instinctively' is '*instinktmässig*'. Cf. p. 100 above.]

indeed those feelings only become fully intelligible when they are transposed into the primitive and infantile setting. A child's emotional impulses are intensely and inexhaustibly deep to a degree quite other than those of an adult; only religious ecstasy can bring them back. A rapture of devotion to God was thus the first reaction to the return of the great father.

The direction to be taken by this father-religion was in this way laid down for all time. Yet this did not bring its development to an end. Ambivalence is a part of the essence of the relation to the father: in the course of time the hostility too could not fail to stir, which had once driven the sons into killing their admired and dreaded father. There was no place in the framework of the religion of Moses for a direct expression of the murderous hatred of the father. All that could come to light was a mighty reaction against it – a sense of guilt on account of that hostility, a bad conscience for having sinned against God and for not ceasing to sin. This sense of guilt, which was uninterruptedly kept awake by the Prophets, and which soon formed an essential part of the religious system, had yet another superficial motivation, which neatly disguised its true origin. Things were going badly for the people; the hopes resting on the favour of God failed in fulfilment; it was not easy to maintain the illusion, loved above all else, of being God's chosen people. If they wished to avoid renouncing that happiness, a sense of guilt on account of their own sinfulness offered a welcome means of exculpating God: they deserved no better than to be punished by him since they had not obeyed his commandments. And, driven by the need to satisfy this sense of guilt, which was insatiable and came from sources so much deeper, they must make those commandments grow ever stricter, more meticulous and even more trivial. In a fresh rapture of moral asceticism they imposed more and more new instinctual renunciations on themselves and in that way reached – in doctrine and precept, at least – ethical heights which had remained inaccessible to the other peoples of antiquity. Many Jews regard this attainment of ethical heights as the second main characteristic and the second great achievement of their religion. The way in which it was connected with the first one – the idea of a single god – should be plain from our remarks. These ethical ideas cannot, however, disavow their origin from the sense of guilt felt on account of a suppressed hostility to God. They possess the char-

acteristic—uncompleted and incapable of completion—of obsessional neurotic reaction-formations; we can guess, too, that they serve the secret purposes of punishment.

The further development takes us beyond Judaism. The remainder of what returned from the tragic drama of the primal father was no longer reconcilable in any way with the religion of Moses. The sense of guilt of those days was very far from being any longer restricted to the Jewish people; it had caught hold of all the Mediterranean peoples as a dull *malaise*, a premonition of calamity for which no one could suggest a reason. Historians of our day speak of an ageing of ancient civilization, but I suspect that they have only grasped accidental and contributory causes of this depressed mood of the peoples. The elucidation of this situation of depression sprang from Jewry. Irrespectively of all the approximations and preparations in the surrounding world, it was after all a Jewish man, Saul of Tarsus who, as a Roman citizen, called himself Paul, in whose spirit the realization first emerged 'the reason we are so unhappy is that we have killed God the father.' And it is entirely understandable that he could only grasp this piece of truth in the delusional disguise of the glad tidings 'we are freed from all guilt since one of us has sacrificed his life to absolve us.' In this formula the killing of God was of course not mentioned, but a crime that had to be atoned by the sacrifice of a victim could only have been a murder. And the intermediate step between the delusion and the historical truth was provided by the assurance that the victim of the sacrifice had been God's son. With the strength which it derived from the source of historical truth, this new faith overthrew every obstacle. The blissful sense of being chosen was replaced by the liberating sense of redemption. But the fact of the parricide, in returning to the memory of mankind, had to overcome greater resistances than the other fact, which had constituted the subject-matter of monotheism,[1] it was also obliged to submit to a more powerful distortion. The unnameable crime was replaced by the hypothesis of what must be described as a shadowy 'original sin'.

Original sin and redemption by the sacrifice of a victim became the foundation stones of the new religion founded by Paul. It must remain uncertain whether there was a tangible

[1] [Namely, the fact of the existence of the primal father.]

and instigator to the murder among the band of brothers who rebelled against the primal father, or whether such a figure was created later by the imagination of creative artists in order to turn themselves into heroes, and was then introduced into the tradition. After the Christian doctrine had burst the framework of Judaism, it took up components from many other sources, renounced a number of characteristics of pure monotheism and adapted itself in many details to the rituals of the other Mediterranean peoples. It was as though Egypt was taking vengeance once more on the heresy of Akhenaten. It is worth noticing how the new religion dealt with the ancient ambivalence in the relation to the father. Its main content was, it is true, reconciliation with God the Father, atonement for the crime committed against him; but the other side of the emotional relation showed itself in the fact that the son, who had taken the atonement on himself, became a god himself beside the father and, actually, in place of the father. Christianity, having arisen out of a father-religion, became a son-religion. It has not escaped the fate of having to get rid of the father.

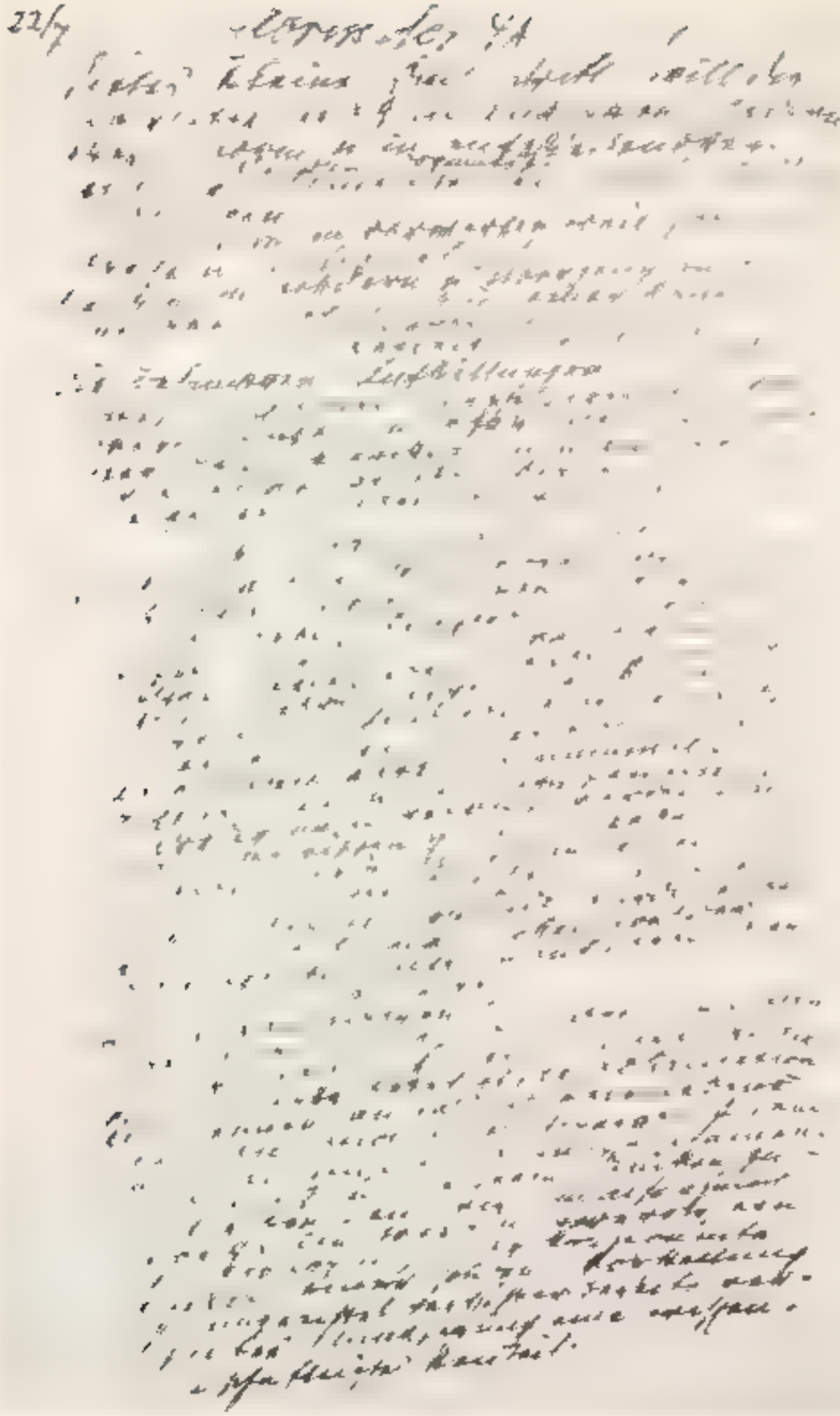
Only a portion of the Jewish people accepted the new doctrine. Those who refused to are still called Jews to-day. Owing to this cleavage, they have become even more sharply divided from other peoples than before. They were obliged to bear the new religious community (which, besides Jews, included Egyptians, Greeks, Syrians, Romans and eventually Germans) reproach them with having murdered God. In full, this reproach would run as follows: 'They will not accept it as true that they murdered God, whereas we admit it and have been cleansed of that guilt.' It is easy therefore to see how much truth lies behind this reproach. A special enquiry would be called for to discover why it has been impossible for the Jews to join in this forward step which was implied, in spite of all its distortions, by the admission of having murdered God. In a certain sense they have in that way taken a tragic load of guilt on themselves; they have been made to pay heavy penance for it.

Our investigation may perhaps have thrown a little light on the question of how the Jewish people have acquired the characteristics which distinguish them. Less light has been thrown on the problem of how it is that they have been able to retain

their individuality till the present day. But exhaustive answers to such riddles cannot in fairness be either demanded or expected. A contribution, to be judged in view of the limitations which I mentioned at the start [p. 105], is all that I can offer.

AN OUTLINE OF PSYCHO-ANALYSIS

(1940 [1938])



The first page of Freud's manuscript of
An Outline of Psycho-Analysis

EDITOR'S NOTE

ABRISS DER PSYCHOANALYSE

(*a*) GERMAN EDITIONS:

1940 *Int. Z. Psychoanal. Imago*, **25**(1), 7–67.
1941 *G.W.*, **17**, 63–138.

(*b*) ENGLISH TRANSLATION:

An Outline of Psycho-Analysis

1940 *Int. J. Psycho-Anal.*, **21**(1), 27–82. (Tr. James Strachey.)
1949 London: Hogarth Press and Institute of Psycho-Analysis. Pp. ix + 84. (Revised reprint of above in book form.)
1949 New York: Norton. Pp. 127. (Reprint of above.)

The present is a considerably revised version of the translation published in 1949.

When this work was first published, both in German and English, it was accompanied by two long extracts from Freud's contemporary fragment 'Some Elementary Lessons in Psycho-Analysis' (1940*b* [1938]). These extracts appeared as a footnote in Chapter IV of the German version (see p. 158 below) and as an appendix in the English one. The fragment from which the extracts were drawn was published in full soon afterwards (it appears below on p. 279), and the footnote and appendix were consequently omitted in the subsequent reprints of the present work.

By an unfortunate oversight, the author's 'Preface' (p. 144 below) was omitted from the *G.W.* reprint and is thus only to be found in German in the *Zeitschrift*. It should be remarked that Volume XVII of the *Gesammelte Werke*, which was the first of its volumes to be published (in 1941), was also issued simultaneously with a different title-page and binding, as *Schriften aus dem Nachlass* (Posthumous Writings).

The manuscript of this whole work is written out in an

unusually abbreviated form. In particular the third chapter ('The Development of the Sexual Function', p. 152) is for the most part greatly abbreviated, with the omission, for instance, of definite and indefinite articles and of many principal verbs – in what may be described as a telegraphic style. The German editors have, as they tell us, expanded these abbreviations. The general sense is not in doubt and, although the editing is at certain points a little free, it has seemed simplest to accept it and to translate the version supplied in the *Gesammelte Werke*.

Part I of the work was not given a title by the author. The German editors adopted for the purpose 'Die Natur des Psychischen' ('The Nature of the Psychical') which is a cross-heading in the contemporary fragment mentioned above, 'Some Elementary Lessons in Psycho-Analysis' (p. 282 below). For the present edition a rather more general title has been devised.

There is some conflict as to when Freud began writing the *Outline*. According to Ernest Jones (1957, 255) 'he began it during the waiting time in Vienna' which would mean April or May, 1938. The manuscript, however, bears on its opening page the date 'July 22', which confirms the statement of the German editors that the work was begun in July, 1938 that is to say, soon after Freud's arrival in London at the beginning of June. By early September he had written 63 sheets of the *Outline*, when his work on it was interrupted by his having to undergo a very serious operation, and he did not return to it again, though he began shortly afterwards on another expository work ('Some Elementary Lessons in Psycho-Analysis') but very soon broke this off as well.

Thus the *Outline* must be described as unfinished, but it is difficult to regard it as incomplete. The last chapter, it is true, is shorter than the rest and might well have gone on to a discussion of such things as the sense of guilt, though this had already been touched on in Chapter VI. In general, however, the question of how far and in what direction Freud would have proceeded with the book is an intriguing one, for the programme laid down by the author in his preface seems already to be reasonably well carried out.

In the long succession of Freud's expository works the *Outline* exhibits a unique character. The others are without exception aimed at explaining psycho-analysis to an outside public, a

public with very varying degrees and types of general approach to Freud's subject, but always a relatively *ignorant* public. This cannot be said of the *Outline*. It should clearly be understood that this is not a book for beginners; it is something much more like a 'refresher course' for advanced students. The reader is everywhere expected to be familiar not only with Freud's general approach to psychology but with his findings and theories on quite detailed points. For instance, a couple of very short allusions to the part played by the memory traces of verbal sense impressions (pp. 162 and 199) would scarcely be intelligible to anyone unacquainted with a number of difficult arguments in the last chapter of *The Interpretation of Dreams* and in the final section of the metapsychological paper on 'The Unconscious'. And again, the very scanty remarks in two or three places on identification and its relation to abandoned love-objects (pp. 193 and 235) imply a knowledge at least of Chapter III of *The Ego and the Id*. But those who are already at home in Freud's writings will find this a most fascinating epilogue. New light is thrown on whatever he touches—the most fundamental theories or the most detailed clinical observations—and everything is discussed in the vocabulary of his very latest terminology. There are even occasional hints at entirely new developments, particularly in the later part of Chapter VIII, where the question of the splitting of the ego and its disavowal of portions of the external world as exemplified in the case of fetishism receives an enlarged consideration. All of this shows that at the age of 82 Freud still possessed an astonishing gift for making a fresh approach to what might have seemed well-worn topics. Nowhere else, perhaps, does his style reach a higher level of succinctness and lucidity. The whole work gives us a sense of freedom in its presentation which is perhaps to be expected in a master's last account of the ideas of which he was the creator.

AN OUTLINE OF PSYCHO-ANALYSIS

[PREFACE]

THE aim of this brief work is to bring together the tenets of psycho-analysis and to state them, as it were, dogmatically—in the most concise form and in the most unequivocal terms. Its intention is naturally not to compel belief or to arouse conviction.

The teachings of psycho-analysis are based on an incalculable number of observations and experiences, and only someone who has repeated those observations on himself and on others is in a position to arrive at a judgement of his own upon it.

PART I

[THE MIND AND ITS WORKINGS]

CHAPTER I

THE PSYCHICAL APPARATUS

PSYCHO-ANALYSIS makes a basic assumption, the discussion of which is reserved to philosophical thought but the justification for which lies in its results. We know two kinds of things about what we call our psyche (or mental life): firstly, its bodily organ and scene of action, the brain (or nervous system) and, on the other hand, our acts of consciousness, which are immediate data and cannot be further explained by any sort of description. Everything that lies between is unknown to us, and the data do not include any direct relation between these two terminal points of our knowledge. If it existed, it would at the most

afford an exact localization of the processes of consciousness and would give us no help towards understanding them.

Our two hypotheses start out from these ends or beginnings of our knowledge. The first is concerned with localization.[1] We assume that mental life is the function of an apparatus to which we ascribe the characteristics of being extended in space and of being made up of several portions—which we imagine, that is, as resembling a telescope or microscope or something of the kind. Notwithstanding some earlier attempts in the same direction, the consistent working-out of a conception such as this is a scientific novelty.

We have arrived at our knowledge of this psychical apparatus by studying the individual development of human beings. To the oldest of these psychical provinces or agencies we give the name of *id*. It contains everything that is inherited, that is present at birth, that is laid down in the constitution—above all, therefore, the instincts, which originate from the somatic organization and which find a first psychical expression here [in the id] in forms unknown to us.[2]

Under the influence of the real external world around us, one portion of the id has undergone a special development. From what was originally a cortical layer, equipped with the organs for receiving stimuli and with arrangements for acting as a protective shield against stimuli, a special organization has arisen which henceforward acts as an intermediary between the id and the external world. To this region of our mind we have given the name of *ego*.

Here are the principal characteristics of the ego. In consequence of the pre-established connection between sense perception and muscular action, the ego has voluntary movement at its command. It has the task of self-preservation. As regards *external* events, it performs that task by becoming aware of stimuli, by storing up experiences about them (in the memory), by avoiding excessively strong stimuli (through flight), by dealing with moderate stimuli (through adaptation) and finally by learning to bring about expedient changes in the external world to its own advantage (through activity). As regards *internal* events, in

[1] [The second is stated on p. 158 below.]

[2] This oldest portion of the psychical apparatus remains the most important throughout life, moreover, the investigations of psychoanalysis started with it.

relation to the id, it performs that task by gaining control over the demands of the instincts, by deciding whether they are to be allowed satisfaction, by postponing that satisfaction to times and circumstances favourable in the external world or by suppressing their excitations entirely. It is guided in its activity by consideration of the tensions produced by stimuli, whether these tensions are present in it or introduced into it. The raising of these tensions is in general felt as *unpleasure* and their lowering as *pleasure*. It is probable, however, that what is felt as pleasure or unpleasure is not the *absolute* height of this tension but something in the rhythm of the changes in them. The ego strives after pleasure and seeks to avoid unpleasure. An increase in unpleasure that is expected and foreseen is met by a *signal of anxiety*; the occasion of such an increase, whether it threatens from without or within, is known as a *danger*. From time to time the ego gives up its connection with the external world and withdraws into the state of sleep, in which it makes far-reaching changes in its organization. It is to be inferred from the state of sleep that this organization consists in a particular distribution of mental energy.

The long period of childhood, during which the growing human being lives in dependence on his parents, leaves behind it as a precipitate the formation in his ego of a special agency in which this parental influence is prolonged. It has received the name of *super-ego*. In so far as this super-ego is differentiated from the ego or is opposed to it, it constitutes a third power which the ego must take into account.

An action by the ego is as it should be if it satisfies simultaneously the demands of the id, of the super-ego and of reality — that is to say, if it is able to reconcile their demands with one another. The details of the relation between the ego and the super-ego become completely intelligible when they are traced back to the child's attitude to its parents. This parental influence of course includes in its operation not only the personalities of the actual parents but also the family, racial and national traditions handed on through them, as well as the demands of the immediate social *milieu* which they represent. In the same way, the super-ego, in the course of an individual's development, receives contributions from later successors and substitutes of his parents, such as teachers and models in public life of admired social ideals. It will be observed that, for all their fundamental

difference, the id and the super-ego have one thing in common: they both represent the influences of the past—the id the influence of heredity, the super-ego the influence, essentially, of what is taken over from other people—whereas the ego is principally determined by the individual's own experience, that is by accidental and contemporary events.

This general schematic picture of a psychical apparatus may be supposed to apply as well to the higher animals which resemble man mentally. A super-ego must be presumed to be present wherever, as is the case with man, there is a long period of dependence in childhood. A distinction between ego and id is an unavoidable assumption. Animal psychology has not yet taken in hand the interesting problem which is here presented.

Chapter II

THE THEORY OF THE INSTINCTS

The power of the id expresses the true purpose of the individual organism's life. This consists in the satisfaction of its innate needs. No such purpose as that of keeping itself alive or of protecting itself from dangers by means of anxiety can be attributed to the id. That is the task of the ego, whose business it also is to discover the most favourable and least perilous method of obtaining satisfaction, taking the external world into account. The super-ego may bring fresh needs to the fore, but its main function remains the limitation of satisfactions.

The forces which we assume to exist behind the tensions caused by the needs of the id are called *instincts*. They represent the somatic demands upon the mind. Though they are the ultimate cause of all activity, they are of a conservative nature; the state, whatever it may be, which an organism has reached gives rise to a tendency to re-establish that state so soon as it has been abandoned. It is thus possible to distinguish an indeterminate number of instincts, and in common practice this is in fact done. For us, however, the important question arises whether it may not be possible to trace all these numerous instincts back to a few basic ones. We have found that instincts can change their aim (by displacement, and also that they can replace one another—the energy of one instinct passing over to another. This latter process is still insufficiently understood. After long hesitancies and vacillations we have decided to assume the existence of only two basic instincts, *Eros* and *the destructive instinct*. The contrast between the instincts of self-preservation and the preservation of the species, as well as the contrast between ego-love and object-love, fall within Eros.) The aim of the first of these basic instincts is to establish ever greater unities and to preserve them thus—in short, to bind together; the aim of the second is, on the contrary, to undo connections and so to destroy things. In the case of the destructive instinct we may suppose that its final aim is to lead what is living into an inorganic state. For this reason we also call it the *death instinct*. If we assume that living things came later than inani-

mate ones and arose from them, then the death instinct fits in with the formula we have proposed to the effect that instincts tend towards a return to an earlier state. In the case of Eros or the love instinct we cannot apply this formula. To do so would presuppose that living substance was once a unity which had later been torn apart and was now striving towards re-union.[1]

In biological functions the two basic instincts operate against each other or combine with each other. Thus, the act of eating is a destruction of the object with the final aim of incorporating it, and the sexual act is an act of aggression with the purpose of the most intimate union. This concurrent and mutually opposing action of the two basic instincts gives rise to the whole variegation of the phenomena of life. The analogy of our two basic instincts extends from the sphere of living things to the pair of opposing forces attraction and repulsion which rule in the inorganic world.[2]

Modifications in the proportions of the fusion between the instincts have the most tangible results. A surplus of sexual aggressiveness will turn a lover into a sex-murderer, while a sharp diminution in the aggressive factor will make him bashful or impotent.

There can be no question of restricting one or the other of the basic instincts to one of the provinces of the mind. They must necessarily be met with everywhere. We may picture an initial state as one in which the total available energy of Eros, which henceforward we shall speak of as 'libido', is present in the still undifferentiated ego-id[3] and serves to neutralize the destructive

[1] Creative writers have imagined something of the sort, but nothing like it is known to us from the actual history of living substance. [Freud no doubt had in mind among other writings Plato's *Symposium* which he had quoted in this connection in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* (1920*g*), *Standard Ed.*, **18**, 57–8, and to which he had alluded earlier still, in the first of the *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality* (1905*d*), *Standard Ed.*, **7**, 136.]

[2] This picture of the basic forces or instincts, which still arouses much opposition among analysts, was already familiar to the philosopher Empedocles of Acragas. [Freud had discussed Empedocles and his theories at some length in Section VI of his paper on 'Analysis Terminable and Interminable' (1937*c*), p. 245 below. He had included a reference to the dual forces operating in physics in his open letter to Einstein, *Why War?* (1933*b*), *Standard Ed.*, **22**, 209, as well as in Lecture XXXII of the *New Introductory Lectures* (1933*a*), ibid., 103.]

[3] [See footnote, p. 151 below.]

tendencies which are simultaneously present. (We are without a term analogous to 'libido' for describing the energy of the destructive instinct. At a later stage it becomes relatively easy for us to follow the vicissitudes of the libido, but this is more difficult with the destructive instinct.

So long as that instinct operates internally, as a death instinct, it remains silent, it only comes to our notice when it is diverted outwards as an instinct of destruction. It seems to be essential for the preservation of the individual that this diversion should occur; the muscular apparatus serves this purpose. When the super-ego is established, considerable amounts of the aggressive instinct are fixated in the interior of the ego and operate there self-destructively. This is one of the dangers to health by which human beings are faced on their path to cultural development. Holding back aggressiveness is in general unhealthy and leads to illness (to mortification[1]). A person in a fit of rage will often demonstrate how the transition from aggressiveness that has been prevented to self-destructiveness is brought about by diverting the aggressiveness against himself: he tears his hair or beats his face with his fists, though he would evidently have preferred to apply this treatment to someone else. Some portion of self-destructiveness remains within, whatever the circumstances; till at last it succeeds in killing the individual, not, perhaps, until his libido has been used up or fixated in a disadvantageous way. Thus it may in general be suspected that the *individual* dies of his internal conflicts but that the *species* dies of its unsuccessful struggle against the external world if the latter changes in a fashion which cannot be adequately dealt with by the adaptations which the species has acquired.

It is hard to say anything of the behaviour of the libido in the id and in the super-ego. All that we know about it relates to the ego, in which at first the whole available quota of libido is stored up. We call this state absolute, primary *narcissism*. It lasts till the ego begins to cathect the ideas of objects with libido, to transform narcissistic libido into object-libido. Throughout the whole of life the ego remains the great reservoir from which libidinal cathexes are sent out to objects and into which they are also once more withdrawn, just as an amoeba

[1] ['*Krankung*' means literally 'making ill'. This same point, including the verbal one, was made by Freud in a lecture on hysteria delivered forty-five years previously. See Freud, 1893*h*, *Standard Ed.*, **3**, 37.]

behaves with its pseudopodia.[1] It is only when a person is completely in love that the main quota of libido is transferred on to the object and the object to some extent takes the place of the ego. A characteristic of the libido which is important in life is its *mobility*, the facility with which it passes from one object to another. This must be contrasted with the *fixation* of the libido to particular objects, which often persists throughout life.

There can be no question but that the libido has somatic sources, that it streams to the ego from various organs and parts of the body. This is most clearly seen in the case of that portion of the libido which, from its instinctual aim, is described as sexual excitation. The most prominent of the parts of the body from which this libido arises are known by the name of '*erotogenic zones*', though in fact the whole body is an erotogenic zone of this kind. The greater part of what we know about Eros —that is to say, about its exponent, the libido—has been gained from a study of the sexual function, which, indeed, on the prevailing view, even if not according to our theory, coincides with Eros. We have been able to form a picture of the way in which the sexual urge, which is destined to exercise a decisive influence on our life, gradually develops out of successive contributions from a number of component instincts, which represent particular erotogenic zones.

[1] [Some discussion of this passage, and of part of another one on p. 149 above, will be found in Appendix B to *The Ego and the Id* (1923*b*), *Standard Ed.*, **19**, 64–5.]

Chapter III[1]

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE SEXUAL FUNCTION

According to the prevailing view human sexual life consists essentially in an endeavour to bring one's own genitals into contact with those of someone of the opposite sex. With this are associated, as accessory phenomena and introductory acts, kissing this extraneous body, looking at it and touching it. This endeavour is supposed to make its appearance at puberty – that is, at the age of sexual maturity – and to serve the purposes of reproduction. Nevertheless, certain facts have always been known which do not fit into the narrow framework of this view. (1) It is a remarkable fact that there are people who are only attracted by individuals of their own sex and by their genitals. (2) It is equally remarkable that there are people whose desires behave exactly like sexual ones but who at the same time entirely disregard the sexual organs or their normal use; people of this kind are known as 'perverts'. (3) And lastly it is a striking thing that some children (who are on that account regarded as degenerate) take a very early interest in their genitals and show signs of excitation in them.

It may well be believed that psycho-analysis provoked astonishment and denials when, partly on the basis of these three neglected facts, it contradicted all the popular opinions on sexuality. Its principal findings are as follows:

a) Sexual life does not begin only at puberty, but starts with plain manifestations soon after birth.

b) It is necessary to distinguish sharply between the concepts of 'sexual' and 'genital'. The former is the wider concept and includes many activities that have nothing to do with the genitals.

c) Sexual life includes the function of obtaining pleasure from zones of the body – a function which is subsequently brought into the service of reproduction. The two functions often fail to coincide completely.

[1] [An expanded version of the original. See the Editor's Note, p. 142 above.]

The chief interest is naturally focused on the first of these assertions, the most unexpected of all. It has been found that in early childhood there are signs of bodily activity to which only an ancient prejudice could deny the name of sexual and which are linked to psychical phenomena that we come across later in adult erotic life – such as fixation to particular objects, jealousy, and so on. It is further found, however, that these phenomena which emerge in early childhood form part of an ordered course of development, that they pass through a regular process of increase, reaching a climax towards the end of the fifth year, after which there follows a lull. During this lull progress is at a standstill and much is unlearnt and there is much recession. After the end of this period of latency, as it is called, sexual life advances once more with puberty; we might say that it has a second efflorescence. And here we come upon the fact that the onset of sexual life is *diphasic*, that it occurs in two waves – something that is unknown except in man and evidently has an important bearing on hominization. [See p. 75 above.][1] It is not a matter of indifference that the events of this early period, except for a few residues, fall a victim to *infantile amnesia*. Our views on the aetiology of the neuroses and our technique of analytic therapy are derived from these conceptions; and our tracing of the developmental processes in this early period has also provided evidence for yet other conclusions.

The first organ to emerge as an erotogenic zone and to make libidinal demands on the mind is, from the time of birth onwards, the mouth. To begin with, all psychical activity is

[1] Cf. the suggestion that man is descended from a mammal which reached sexual maturity at the age of five, but that some major external influence was brought to bear on the species and at that point interrupted the straight course of development of sexuality. Other transformations in the sexual life of man as compared with that of animals might be connected with this – such as the abolition of the periodicity of the libido and the exploitation of the part played by menstruation in the relation between the sexes. [The idea of there being a connection between the latency period and the glacial epoch was first made many years earlier by Ferenczi (1913). Freud referred to it with a good deal of caution in *The Ego and the Id* (1923), *Standard Ed.*, **19**, 35 and again, with rather greater acquiescence, in *Inhibitions, Symptoms and Anxiety* (1926), ibid., **20**, 155. The question of the cessation of periodicity in the sexual function was discussed by Freud at some length in two footnotes to Chapter IV of *Civilization and its Discontents* (1930), ibid., **21**, 99–100 and 105–7.]

concentrated on providing satisfaction for the needs of that zone. Primarily, of course, this satisfaction serves the purpose of self-preservation by means of nourishment; but physiology should not be confused with psychology. The baby's obstinate persistence in sucking gives evidence at an early stage of a need for satisfaction which, though it originates from and is instigated by the taking of nourishment, nevertheless strives to obtain pleasure independently of nourishment and for that reason may and should be termed *sexual*.

During this oral phase sadistic impulses already occur sporadically along with the appearance of the teeth. Their extent is far greater in the second phase, which we describe as the sadistic-anal one, because satisfaction is then sought in aggression and in the excretory function. Our justification for including aggressive urges under the libido is based on the view that sadism is an instinctual fusion of purely libidinal and purely destructive urges, a fusion which thenceforward persists uninterruptedly.[1]

The third phase is that known as the phallic one, which is, as it were, a forerunner of the final form taken by sexual life and already much resembles it. It is to be noted that it is not the genitals of both sexes that play a part at this stage, but only the male ones (the phallus). The female genitals long remain unknown. In children's attempts to understand the sexual processes they pay homage to the venerable cloacal theory—a theory which has a genetic justification.[2]

With the phallic phase and in the course of it the sexuality of early childhood reaches its height and approaches its dissolution. Thereafter boys and girls have different histories. Both have begun to put their intellectual activity at the service of sexual researches; both start off from the premiss of the universal presence of the penis. But now the paths of the sexes diverge.

[1] The question arises whether the satisfaction of purely destructive instinctual impulses can be felt as pleasure, whether pure destructiveness without any libidinal admixture occurs. Satisfaction of the death instinct remaining in the ego seems not to produce feelings of pleasure, though masochism represents a fusion which is entirely analogous to sadism.

[2] The occurrence of early vaginal excitations is often asserted. But it is most probable that what is in question are excitations in the clitoris—that is, in an organ analogous to the penis. This does not invalidate our right to describe the phase as phallic.

The boy enters the Oedipus phase; he begins to manipulate his penis and simultaneously has phantasies of carrying out some sort of activity with it in relation to his mother, till, owing to the combined effect of a threat of castration and the sight of the absence of a penis in females, he experiences the greatest trauma of his life and this introduces the period of latency with all its consequences. The girl, after vainly attempting to do the same as the boy, comes to recognize her lack of a penis or rather the inferiority of her clitoris, with permanent effects on the development of her character; as a result of this first disappointment in rivalry, she often begins by turning away altogether from sexual life.

It would be a mistake to suppose that these three phases succeed one another in a clear-cut fashion. One may appear in addition to another; they may overlap one another, may be present alongside of one another. In the early phases the different component instincts set about their pursuit of pleasure independently of one another; in the phallic phase there are the beginnings of an organization which subordinates the other urges to the primacy of the genitals and signifies the start of a co-ordination of the general urge towards pleasure into the sexual function. The complete organization is only achieved at puberty, in a fourth, genital phase. A state of things is then established in which (1) some earlier libidinal cathexes are retained, (2) others are taken into the sexual function as preparatory, auxiliary acts, the satisfaction of which produces what is known as fore-pleasure, and (3) other urges are excluded from the organization, and are either suppressed altogether (repressed) or are employed in the ego in another way, forming character-traits or undergoing sublimation with a displacement of their aims.

This process is not always performed faultlessly. Inhibitions in its development manifest themselves as the many sorts of disturbance in sexual life. When this is so, we find fixations of the libido to conditions in earlier phases, whose urge, which is independent of the normal sexual aim, is described as *perversion*. One such developmental inhibition, for instance, is homosexuality when it is manifest. Analysis shows that in every case a homosexual object-tie was present and in most cases persisted in a *latent* condition. The situation is complicated by the fact that as a rule the processes necessary for bringing about a

normal outcome are not completely present or absent, but *partially* present, so that the final result remains dependent on these *quantitative* relations. In these circumstances the genital organization is, it is true, attained, but it lacks those portions of the libido which have not advanced with the rest and have remained fixated to pregenital objects and aims. This weakening shows itself in a tendency, if there is an absence of genital satisfaction or if there are difficulties in the real external world, for the libido to hark back to its earlier pregenital cathexes (*regression*).

During the study of the sexual functions we have been able to gain a first, preliminary conviction, or rather a suspicion, of two discoveries which will later be found to be important over the whole of our field. Firstly, the normal and abnormal manifestations observed by us (that is, the phenomenology of the subject) need to be described from the point of view of their dynamics and economics (in our case, from the point of view of the quantitative distribution of the libido). And secondly, the aetiology of the disorders which we study is to be looked for in the individual's developmental history—that is to say, in his early life.

Chapter IV

PSYCHICAL QUALITIES

I HAVE described the structure of the psychical apparatus and the energies or forces which are active in it, and I have traced in a prominent example the way in which those energies—in the main, the libido—organize themselves into a physiological function which serves the purpose of the preservation of the species. There was nothing in all this to demonstrate the quite peculiar characteristic of what is psychical, apart, of course, from the empirical fact that this apparatus and these energies are the basis of the functions which we describe as our mental life. I will now turn to something which is uniquely characteristic of what is psychical, and which, indeed, according to a very widely held opinion, coincides with it to the exclusion of all else.

The starting-point for this investigation is provided by a fact without parallel, which defies all explanation or description—the fact of consciousness. Nevertheless, if anyone speaks of consciousness we know immediately and from our most personal experience what is meant by it.[1] Many people, both inside and outside [psychological] science, are satisfied with the assumption that consciousness alone is psychical, in that case nothing remains for psychology but to discriminate among psychical phenomena between perceptions, feelings, thought-processes and volitions. It is generally agreed, however, that these conscious processes do not form unbroken sequences which are complete in themselves; there would thus be no alternative left to assuming that there are physical or somatic processes which are concomitant with the psychical ones and which we should necessarily have to recognize as more complete than the psychical sequences, since some of them would have conscious processes parallel to them but others would not. If so, it of course becomes plausible to lay the stress in psychology on these somatic processes, to see in *them* the true essence of what is psychical and to look for some other assessment of the conscious

[1] One extreme line of thought, exemplified in the American doctrine of behaviourism, thinks it possible to construct a psychology which disregards this fundamental fact!

can lay claim to the same value as approximations that belongs to the corresponding intellectual scaffolding found in other natural sciences, and we look forward to their being modified, corrected and more precisely determined as further experience is accumulated and sifted. So too it will be entirely in accordance with our expectations if the basic concepts and principles of the new science (instinct, nervous energy, etc.) remain for a considerable time no less indeterminate than those of the older sciences (force, mass, attraction, etc.).

Every science is based on observations and experiences arrived at through the medium of our psychical apparatus. But since *our* science has as its subject that apparatus itself, the analogy ends here. We make our observations through the medium of the same perceptual apparatus, precisely with the help of the breaks in the sequence of 'psychical' events; we fill in what is omitted by making plausible inferences and translating it into conscious material. In this way we construct, as it were, a sequence of conscious events complementary to the unconscious psychical processes. The relative certainty of our psychical science is based on the binding force of these inferences. Anyone who enters deeply into our work will find that our technique holds its ground against any criticism.

In the course of this work the distinctions which we describe as psychical qualities force themselves on our notice. There is no need to characterize what we call 'conscious': it is the same as the consciousness of philosophers and of everyday opinion. Everything else psychical is in our view 'the unconscious'. We are soon led to make an important division in this unconscious. Some processes become conscious easily; they may then cease to be conscious, but can become conscious once more without any trouble, as people say, they can be reproduced or remembered. This reminds us that consciousness is in general a highly fugitive state. What is conscious is conscious only for a moment. If our perceptions do not confirm this, the contradiction is only an apparent one; it is explained by the fact that the stimuli which lead to perception may persist for considerable periods, so that meanwhile the perception of them may be repeated. The whole position is made clear in connection with the conscious perception of our thought-processes, these too may persist for some time, but they may just as well pass in a flash. Everything unconscious that behaves in this way, that can thus easily

processes. The majority of philosophers, however, as well as many other people, dispute this and declare that the idea of something psychical being unconscious is self-contradictory.

But that is precisely what psycho-analysis is obliged to assert, and this is its second fundamental hypothesis [p. 145]. It explains the supposedly somatic concomitant phenomena as being what is truly psychical, and thus in the first instance disregards the quality of consciousness. It is not alone in doing this. Some thinkers such as Theodor Lipps,[1] for instance, have asserted the same thing in the same words; and the general dissatisfaction with the usual view of what is psychical has resulted in an increasingly urgent demand for the inclusion in psychological thought of a concept of the unconscious, though this demand has taken such an indefinite and obscure form that it could have no influence on science.[2]

Now it would look as though this dispute between psycho-analysis and philosophy is concerned only with a trifling matter of definition—the question whether the name 'psychical' should be applied to one or another sequence of phenomena. In fact, however, this step has become of the highest significance. Whereas the psychology of consciousness never went beyond the broken sequences which were obviously dependent on something else, the other view, which held that the psychical is unconscious in itself, enabled psychology to take its place as a natural science like any other. The processes with which it is concerned are in themselves just as unknowable as those dealt with by other sciences, by chemistry or physics, for example; but it is possible to establish the laws which they obey and to follow their mutual relations and interdependences unbroken over long stretches—in short, to arrive at what is described as an 'understanding' of the field of natural phenomena in question. This cannot be effected without framing fresh hypotheses and creating fresh concepts, but these are not to be despised as evidence of embarrassment on our part but deserve on the contrary to be appreciated as an enrichment of science. They

[1] [Some account of Lipps (1851–1914) and Freud's relations with him is given in the Editor's Preface to Freud's book on jokes (1905*c*), *Standard Ed.*, 8, 4–5).]

[2] [When this work was first published in 1940, a long footnote was inserted at this point in the German version. See the Editor's Note, p. 141 above.]

exchange the unconscious state for the conscious one, is therefore preferably described as 'capable of becoming conscious' or as *preconscious*. Experience has taught us that there is hardly a psychical process, however complicated it may be, which cannot on occasion remain preconscious, even though as a rule it will, as we say, push its way forward into consciousness. There are other psychical processes and psychical material which have no such easy access to becoming conscious but must be inferred, recognized and translated into conscious form in the manner described. For such material we reserve the name of the unconscious proper.

Thus we have attributed three qualities to psychical processes: they are either conscious, preconscious or unconscious. The division between the three classes of material which possess these qualities is neither absolute nor permanent. What is preconscious becomes conscious, as we have seen, without any assistance from us, what is unconscious can, through our efforts, be made conscious, and in the process we may have a feeling that we are often overcoming very strong resistances. When we attempt to do this with someone else, we should not forget that the conscious filling-in of the gaps in his perceptions – the construction we are presenting him with – does not mean as yet that we have made the unconscious material in question conscious to him. All that is true so far is that the material is present in him in two records,[1] once in the conscious reconstruction he has been given, and besides this in its original unconscious state. Our continued efforts usually succeed eventually in making this unconscious material conscious to him himself, as a result of which the two records are brought to coincide. The amount of effort we have to use, by which we estimate the resistance against the material becoming conscious, varies in magnitude in individual cases. For instance, what comes about in an analytic treatment as a result of our efforts can also occur spon-

[1] [The German word translated by 'record' here is '*Fixierung*' used in exactly this sense in Chapter VII B) of *The Interpretation of Dreams* (1900*a*), *S.E.*, **5**, 539. Elsewhere Freud uses the term '*Niederschrift*' – e.g. in 'The Unconscious' (1915*e*), *Standard Ed.*, **14**, 174, and as early as in a letter to Fliess, of December 6, 1896 (Freud 1950*a*, Letter 52) – which is translated there by 'registration'. It may be remarked that in *Moses and Monotheism* (1939*a*), which Freud had recently completed, he several times used the word '*Fixierung*' to describe the recording of a tradition. See, for example, p. 62 above.]

taneously: material which is ordinarily unconscious can transform itself into preconscious material and then becomes conscious—a thing that happens to a large extent in psychotic states. From this we infer that the maintenance of certain internal resistances is a *sine qua non* of normality. A relaxation of resistances such as this, with a consequent pushing forward of unconscious material, takes place regularly in the state of sleep, and thus brings about a necessary precondition for the construction of dreams. Conversely, preconscious material can become temporarily inaccessible and cut off by resistances, as happens when something is temporarily forgotten or escapes the memory, or a preconscious thought can even be temporarily put back into the unconscious state, as seems to be a precondition in the case of jokes. We shall see that a similar transformation back of preconscious material or processes into the unconscious state plays a great part in the causation of neurotic disorders.

The theory of the three qualities of what is psychical, as described in this generalized and simplified manner, seems likely to be a source of limitless confusion rather than a help towards clarification. But it should not be forgotten that in fact it is not a theory at all but a first stock-taking of the facts of our observations, that it keeps as close to those facts as possible and does not attempt to explain them. The complications which it reveals may bring into relief the peculiar difficulties with which our investigations have to contend. It may be suspected, however, that we shall come to a closer understanding of this theory itself if we trace out the relations between the psychical qualities and the provinces or agencies of the psychical apparatus which we have postulated—though these relations too are far from being simple.

The process of something becoming conscious is above all linked with the perceptions which our sense organs receive from the external world. From the topographical point of view, therefore, it is a phenomenon which takes place in the outermost cortex of the ego. It is true that we also receive conscious information from the inside of the body—the feelings, which actually exercise a more peremptory influence on our mental life than external perceptions; moreover, in certain circumstances the sense organs themselves transmit feelings, sensations of pain, in addition to the perceptions specific to them. Since, however, these sensations (as we call them in contrast to

conscious perceptions also emanate from the terminal organs and since we regard all these as prolongations or offshoots of the cortical layer, we are still able to maintain the assertion made above [at the beginning of this paragraph]. The only distinction would be that, as regards the terminal organs of sensation and feeling, the body itself would take the place of the external world.

Conscious processes on the periphery of the ego and everything else in the ego unconscious—such would be the simplest state of affairs that we might picture. And such may in fact be the state that prevails in animals. But in men there is an added complication through which internal processes in the ego may also acquire the quality of consciousness. This is the work of the function of speech, which brings material in the ego into a firm connection with mnemic residues of visual, but more particularly of auditory, perceptions. Thenceforward the perceptual periphery of the cortical layer can be excited to a much greater extent from inside as well, internal events such as passages of ideas and thought-processes can become conscious, and a special device is called for in order to distinguish between the two possibilities—a device known as *reality testing*. The equation 'perception = reality (external world)' no longer holds. Errors, which can now easily arise and do so regularly in dreams, are called *hallucinations*.

The inside of the ego, which comprises above all the thought-processes, has the quality of being preconscious. This is characteristic of the ego and belongs to it alone. It would not be correct, however, to think that connection with the mnemic residues of speech is a necessary precondition of the preconscious state. On the contrary, that state is independent of a connection with them, though the presence of that connection makes it safe to infer the preconscious nature of a process. The preconscious state, characterized on the one hand by having access to consciousness and on the other hand by its connection with the speech-residues, is nevertheless something peculiar, the nature of which is not exhausted by these two characteristics. The evidence for this is the fact that large portions of the ego, and particularly of the super-ego, which cannot be denied the characteristic of preconsciousness, none the less remain for the most part unconscious in the phenomenological sense of the word. We do not know why this must be so. We shall attempt

presently to attack the problem of the true nature of the preconscious.

The sole prevailing quality in the id is that of being unconscious. Id and unconscious are as intimately linked as ego and preconscious. Indeed, in the former case the connection is even more exclusive. If we look back at the developmental history of an individual and of his psychical apparatus, we shall be able to perceive an important distinction in the id. Originally, to be sure, everything was id, the ego was developed out of the id by the continual influence of the external world. In the course of this slow development certain of the contents of the id were transformed into the preconscious state and so taken into the ego; others of its contents remained in the id unchanged, as its scarcely accessible nucleus. During this development, however, the young and feeble ego put back into the unconscious state some of the material it had already taken in, dropped it, and behaved in the same way to some fresh impressions which it *might* have taken in, so that these, having been rejected, could leave a trace only in the id. In consideration of its origin we speak of this latter portion of the id as *the repressed*. It is of little importance that we are not always able to draw a sharp line between these two categories of contents in the id. They coincide approximately with the distinction between what was innately present originally and what was acquired in the course of the ego's development.

Having now decided upon the topographical dissection of the psychical apparatus into an ego and an id, with which the difference in quality between preconscious and unconscious runs parallel, and having agreed that this quality is to be regarded only as an *indication* of the difference and not as its essence, a further question faces us. What, if this is so, is the true nature of the state which is revealed in the id by the quality of being unconscious and in the ego by that of being preconscious and in what does the difference between them consist?

But of that we know nothing. And the profound obscurity of the background of our ignorance is scarcely illuminated by a few glimmers of insight. Here we have approached the still shrouded secret of the nature of the psychical. We assume, as other natural sciences have led us to expect, that in mental life some kind of energy is at work, but we have nothing to go upon which will enable us to come nearer to a knowledge of it by

analogies with other forms of energy. We seem to recognize that nervous or psychical energy occurs in two forms, one freely mobile and another, by comparison, bound; we speak of cathexes and hypercathexes of psychical material, and even venture to suppose that a hypercathexis brings about a kind of synthesis of different processes a synthesis in the course of which free energy is transformed into bound energy. Further than this we have not advanced. At any rate, we hold firmly to the view that the distinction between the unconscious and the preconscious state lies in dynamic relations of this kind, which would explain how it is that, whether spontaneously or with our assistance, the one can be changed into the other.

Behind all these uncertainties, however, there lies one new fact, whose discovery we owe to psycho-analytic research. We have found that processes in the unconscious or in the id obey different laws from those in the preconscious ego. We name these laws in their totality the *primary process*, in contrast to the *secondary process* which governs the course of events in the preconscious, in the ego. In the end, therefore, the study of psychical qualities has after all proved not unfruitful.

Chapter V

DREAM-INTERPRETATION AS AN ILLUSTRATION

An investigation of normal, stable states, in which the frontiers of the ego are safeguarded against the id by resistances (anti-cathexes) and have held firm, and in which the super-ego is not distinguished from the ego, because they work together harmoniously—an investigation of that kind would teach us little. The only thing that can help us are states of conflict and uproar, when the contents of the unconscious id have a prospect of forcing their way into the ego and into consciousness and the ego puts itself once more on the defensive against this invasion. It is only under these conditions that we can make such observations as will confirm or correct our statements about the two partners. Now, our nightly sleep is precisely a state of this sort, and for that reason psychical activity during sleep, which we perceive as dreams, is our most favourable object of study. In that way, too, we avoid the familiar reproach that we base our constructions of normal mental life on pathological findings; for dreams are regular events in the life of a normal person, however much their characteristics may differ from the productions of our waking life. Dreams, as everyone knows, may be confused, unintelligible or positively nonsensical, what they say may contradict all that we know of reality, and we behave in them like insane people, since, so long as we are dreaming, we attribute objective reality to the contents of the dream.

We find our way to the understanding ('interpretation') of a dream by assuming that what we recollect as the dream after we have woken up is not the true dream-process but only a *façade* behind which that process lies concealed. Here we have our distinction between the *manifest* content of a dream and the *latent* dream-thoughts. The process which produces the former out of the latter is described as the *dream-work*. The study of the dream-work teaches us by an excellent example the way in which unconscious material from the id (originally unconscious and repressed unconscious alike) forces its way into the ego, becomes preconscious and, as a result of the ego's opposition, undergoes the changes which we know as *dream-distortion*. There

are no features of a dream which cannot be explained in this way.

It is best to begin by pointing out that the formation of a dream can be provoked in two different ways. Either, on the one hand, an instinctual impulse which is ordinarily suppressed (an unconscious wish) finds enough strength during sleep to make itself felt by the ego, or, on the other hand, an urge left over from waking life, a preconscious train of thought with all the conflicting impulses attached to it, finds reinforcement during sleep from an unconscious element. In short, dreams may arise either from the id or from the ego. The mechanism of dream-formation is in both cases the same and so also is the necessary dynamic precondition. The ego gives evidence of its original derivation from the id by occasionally ceasing its functions and allowing a reversion to an earlier state of things. This is logically brought about by its breaking off its relations with the external world and withdrawing its cathexes from the sense organs. We are justified in saying that there arises at bath an instinct to return to the intra-uterine life that has been abandoned—an instinct to sleep. Sleep is a return of this kind to the womb. Since the waking ego governs motility, that function is paralysed in sleep, and accordingly a good part of the inhibitions imposed on the unconscious id become superfluous. The withdrawal or reduction of these 'anticathexes' thus allows the id what is now a harmless amount of liberty.

The evidence of the share taken by the unconscious id in the formation of dreams is abundant and convincing. (*a*) Memory is far more comprehensive in dreams than in waking life. Dreams bring up recollections which the dreamer has forgotten, which are inaccessible to him when he is awake. (*b*) Dreams make an unrestricted use of linguistic symbols, the meaning of which is for the most part unknown to the dreamer. Our experience, however, enables us to confirm their sense. They probably originate from earlier phases in the development of speech. (*c*) Memory very often reproduces in dreams impressions from the dreamer's early childhood of which we can definitely assert not only that they had been forgotten but that they had become unconscious owing to repression. That explains the help usually indispensable—given us by dreams in the attempts we make during the analytic treatment of neuroses to reconstruct the dreamer's early life. (*d*) Furthermore, dreams

bring to light material which cannot have originated either from the dreamer's adult life or from his forgotten childhood. We are obliged to regard it as part of the *archaic heritage* which a child brings with him into the world, before any experience of his own, influenced by the experiences of his ancestors. We find the counterpart of this phylogenetic material in the earliest human legends and in surviving customs. Thus dreams constitute a source of human prehistory which is not to be despised.

But what makes dreams so invaluable in giving us insight is the circumstance that, when the unconscious material makes its way into the ego, it brings its own modes of working along with it. This means that the preconscious thoughts in which the unconscious material has found its expression are handled in the course of the dream-work as though they were unconscious portions of the id; and, in the case of the alternative method of dream-formation, the preconscious thoughts which have obtained reinforcement from an unconscious instinctual impulse are brought down to the unconscious state. It is only in this way that we learn the laws which govern the passage of events in the unconscious and the respects in which they differ from the rules that are familiar to us in waking thought. Thus the dream-work is essentially an instance of the unconscious working-over of preconscious thought-processes. To take an analogy from history, invading conquerors govern a conquered country, not according to the judicial system which they find in force there, but according to their own. It is, however, an unmistakable fact that the outcome of the dream-work is a compromise. The ego-organization is not yet paralysed, and its influence is to be seen in the distortion imposed on the unconscious material and in what are often very ineffective attempts at giving the total result a form not too unacceptable to the ego (*secondary revision*). In our analogy this would be an expression of the continued resistance of the defeated people.

The laws that govern the passage of events in the unconscious, which come to light in this manner, are remarkable enough and suffice to explain most of what seems strange to us about dreams. Above all there is a striking tendency to *condensation*, an inclination to form fresh unities out of elements which in our waking thought we should certainly have kept separate. As a consequence of this, a single element of the manifest dream often stands for a whole number of latent dream-thoughts

as though it were a combined allusion to all of them; and in general the compass of the manifest dream is extraordinarily small in comparison with the wealth of material from which it has sprung. Another peculiarity of the dream-work, not entirely independent of the former one, is the ease with which psychical intensities[1] (cathexes) are *displaced* from one element to another, so that it often happens that an element which was of little importance in the dream-thoughts appears as the clearest and accordingly most important feature of the manifest dream, and, *vice versa*, that essential elements of the dream-thoughts are represented in the manifest dream only by slight allusions. Moreover, as a rule the existence of quite insignificant points in common between two elements is enough to allow the dream-work to replace one by the other in all further operations. It will easily be imagined how greatly these mechanisms of condensation and displacement can increase the difficulty of interpreting a dream and of revealing the relations between the manifest dream and the latent dream-thoughts. From the evidence of the existence of these two tendencies to condensation and displacement our theory infers that in the unconscious id the energy is in a freely mobile state and that the id sets more store by the possibility of discharging quantities of excitation than by any other consideration,[2] and our theory makes use of these two peculiarities in defining the character of the primary process we have attributed to the id.

The study of the dream-work has taught us many other characteristics of the processes in the unconscious which are as remarkable as they are important; but we must only mention a few of them here. The governing rules of logic carry no weight in the unconscious; it might be called the Realm of the

[1] [A term very often used by Freud from the earliest times as an equivalent to psychical energy. See the Editor's Appendix to the first paper on the neuro-psychoses of defence (1894*a*), *Standard Ed.*, **3**, 66–7, also an Editor's footnote near the end of the paper on 'Female Sexuality' (1931*b*), ibid., **21**, 242–3.]

[2] An analogy may be seen in the behaviour of a non-commissioned officer who accepts a reprimand from his superior in silence but vents his anger on the first innocent private he comes across. [In this instance by the id on discharging quantities of excitation we have an exact replica of what Freud in his *Project* of 1895 (Part I, Section 1) had described in quasi-neurological terms as the primary principle of neuronic activity, 'neurones tend to divest themselves of quantity.' (1950*a*, *Standard Ed.*, **1**.)]

Illogical. Urges with contrary aims exist side by side in the unconscious without any need arising for an adjustment between them. Either they have no influence whatever on each other, or, if they have, no decision is reached, but a compromise comes about which is nonsensical since it embraces mutually incompatible details. With this is connected the fact that contraries are not kept apart but treated as though they were identical, so that in the manifest dream any element may also have the meaning of its opposite. Certain philologists have found that the same held good in the most ancient languages and that contraries such as 'strong-weak', 'light-dark' and 'high-deep' were originally expressed by the same roots, until two different modifications of the primitive word distinguished between the two meanings. Residues of this original double meaning seem to have survived even in a highly developed language like Latin in its use of words such as '*altus*' ('high' and 'deep') and '*sacer*' ('sacred' and 'infamous'). [Cf. p. 121.]

In view of the complication and ambiguity of the relations between the manifest dream and the latent content lying behind it, it is of course justifiable to ask how it is at all possible to deduce the one from the other and whether all we have to go on is a lucky guess, assisted perhaps by a translation of the symbols that occur in the manifest dream. It may be said in reply that in the great majority of cases the problem can be satisfactorily solved, but only with the help of the associations provided by the dreamer himself to the elements of the manifest content. Any other procedure is arbitrary and can yield no certain result. But the dreamer's associations bring to light intermediate links which we can insert in the gap between the two [between the manifest and latent content] and by aid of which we can reinstate the latent content of the dream and 'interpret' it. It is not to be wondered at if this work of interpretation [acting in a direction opposite to the dream-work] fails occasionally to arrive at complete certainty.

It remains for us to give a dynamic explanation of why the sleeping ego takes on the task of the dream-work at all. The explanation is fortunately easy to find. With the help of the unconscious, every dream that is in process of formation makes a demand upon the ego — for the satisfaction of an instinct, if the dream originates from the id, for the solution of a conflict, the removal of a doubt or the forming of an intention, if the

dream originates from a residue of preconscious activity in waking life. The sleeping ego, however, is focused on the wish to maintain sleep; it feels this demand as a disturbance and seeks to get rid of the disturbance. The ego succeeds in doing this by what appears to be an act of compliance. It meets the demand with what is in the circumstances a harmless *fulfilment of a wish* and so gets rid of it. This replacement of the demand by the fulfilment of a wish remains the essential function of the dream-work. It may perhaps be worth while to illustrate this by three simple examples – a hunger dream, a dream of convenience and a dream prompted by sexual desire. A need for food makes itself felt in a dreamer during his sleep, he has a dream of a delicious meal and sleeps on. The choice, of course, was open to him either of waking up and eating something or of continuing his sleep. He decided in favour of the latter and satisfied his hunger by means of the dream – for the time being, at all events, for if his hunger had persisted he would have had to wake up nevertheless. Here is the second example. A sleeper had to wake up so as to be in time for his work at the hospital. But he slept on, and had a dream that he was already at the hospital – but as a patient, who has no need to get up. Or again, a desire becomes active during the night for the enjoyment of a forbidden sexual object, the wife of a friend of the sleeper. He has a dream of sexual intercourse – not, indeed, with this person but with someone else of the same name to whom he is in fact indifferent, or his struggle against the desire may find expression in his mistress remaining altogether anonymous.

Naturally, every case is not so simple. Especially in dreams which have originated from unsolved-with residues of the previous day, and which have only obtained an unconscious reinforcement during the state of sleep, it is often no easy task to uncover the unconscious motive force and its wish-fulfilment; but we may assume that it is always there. The thesis that dreams are the fulfilments of wishes will easily arouse scepticism when it is remembered how many dreams have an actually distressing content or even wake the dreamer in anxiety, quite apart from the numerous dreams without any definite feeling-tone. But the objection based on anxiety dreams cannot be sustained against analysis. It must not be forgotten that dreams are invariably the product of a conflict, that they are a kind of compromise-structure. Something that is a satis-

faction for the unconscious id may for that very reason be a cause of anxiety for the ego.

As the dream-work proceeds, sometimes the unconscious will press forward more successfully and sometimes the ego will defend itself with greater energy. Anxiety dreams are mostly those whose content has undergone the least distortion. If the demand made by the unconscious is too great for the sleeping ego to be in a position to fend it off by the means at its disposal, it abandons the wish to sleep and returns to waking life. We shall be taking every experience into account if we say that a dream is invariably an *attempt* to get rid of a disturbance of sleep by means of a wish-fulfilment, so that the dream is a guardian of sleep. The attempt may succeed more or less completely; it may also fail, and in that case the sleeper wakes up, apparently woken precisely by the dream. So, too, there are occasions when that excellent fellow the night-watchman, whose business it is to guard the little township's sleep, has no alternative but to sound the alarm and waken the sleeping townspeople.

I will close this discussion with a comment which will justify the length of time I have spent on the problem of the interpretation of dreams. Experience has shown that the unconscious mechanisms which we have come to know from our study of the dream-work and which gave us the explanation of the formation of dreams also help us to understand the puzzling symptoms which attract our interest to neuroses and psychoses. A conformity of such a kind cannot fail to excite high hopes in us.

PART II

THE PRACTICAL TASK

Chapter VI

THE TECHNIQUE OF PSYCHO-ANALYSIS

A dream, then, is a psychosis, with all the absurdities, delusions and illusions of a psychosis. A psychosis of short duration, no doubt, harmless, even entrusted with a useful function, introduced with the subject's consent and terminated by an act of his will. None the less it is a psychosis, and we learn from it that even so deep-going an alteration of mental life as this can be undone and can give place to the normal function. Is it too bold, then, to hope that it must also be possible to submit the dreaded spontaneous illnesses of mental life to our influence and bring about their cure?

We already know a number of things preliminary to such an undertaking. According to our hypothesis it is the ego's task to meet the demands raised by its three dependent relations—to reality, to the id and to the super-ego—and nevertheless at the same time to preserve its own organization and maintain its own autonomy. The necessary precondition of the pathological states under discussion can only be a relative or absolute weakening of the ego which makes the fulfilment of its tasks impossible. The severest demand on the ego is probably the keeping down of the instinctual claims of the id, to accomplish which it is obliged to maintain large expenditures of energy on anticathexes. But the demands made by the super-ego too may become so powerful and so relentless that the ego may be paralysed, as it were, in the face of its other tasks. We may suspect that, in the economic conflicts which arise at this point, the id and the super-ego often make common cause against the hard-pressed ego which tries to cling to reality in order to retain its normal state. If the other two become too strong, they succeed in loosening and altering the ego's organization, so that its proper relation to reality is disturbed or even brought

to an end. We have seen it happen in dreaming: when the ego is detached from the reality of the external world, it slips down, under the influence of the internal world, into psychosis.

Our plan of cure is based on these discoveries. The ego is weakened by the internal conflict and we must go to its help. The position is like that in a civil war which has to be decided by the assistance of an ally from outside. The analytic physician and the patient's weakened ego, basing themselves on the real external world, have to band themselves together into a party against the enemies, the instinctual demands of the id and the conscientious demands of the super-ego. We form a pact with each other. The sick ego promises us the most complete candour — promises, that is, to put at our disposal all the material which its self-perception yields it; we assure the patient of the strictest discretion and place at his service our experience in interpreting material that has been influenced by the unconscious. Our knowledge is to make up for his ignorance and to give his ego back its mastery over lost provinces of his mental life. This pact constitutes the analytic situation.

No sooner have we taken this step than a first disappointment awaits us, a first warning against over-confidence. If the patient's ego is to be a useful ally in our common work, it must, however hard it may be pressed by the hostile powers, have retained a certain amount of coherence and some fragment of understanding for the demands of reality. But this is not to be expected of the ego of a psychotic; it cannot observe a pact of this kind, indeed it can scarcely enter into one. It will very soon have tossed us away and the help we offer it and sent us to join the portions of the external world which no longer mean anything to it. Thus we discover that we must renounce the idea of trying our plan of cure upon psychotics—renounce it perhaps for ever or perhaps only for the time being, till we have found some other plan better adapted for them.

There is, however, another class of psychical patients who clearly resemble the psychotics very closely—the vast number of people suffering severely from neuroses. The determinants of their illness as well as its pathogenic mechanisms must be the same or at least very similar. But their ego has proved more resistant and has become less disorganized. Many of them, in spite of their maladies and the inadequacies resulting from them, have been able to maintain themselves in real life.

These neurotics may show themselves ready to accept our help. We will confine our interest to *them* and see how far and by what methods we are able to 'cure' them.

With the neurotics, then, we make our pact: complete candour on one side and strict discretion on the other. This looks as though we were only aiming at the post of a secular father confessor. But there is a great difference, for what we want to hear from our patient is not only what he knows and conceals from other people, but also to tell us too what he does *not* know. With this end in view we give him a more detailed definition of what we mean by candour. We pledge him to obey the *fundamental rule* of analysis, which is henceforward to govern his behaviour towards us. He is to tell us not only what he can say intentionally and willingly, what will give him relief like a confession, but everything else as well that his self-observation yields him, everything that comes into his head, even if it is *disagreeable* for him to say it, even if it seems to him *unimportant* or actually *nonsensical*. If he can succeed after this injunction in putting his self-criticism out of action, he will present us with a mass of material—thoughts, ideas, recollections—which are already subject to the influence of the unconscious, which are often its direct derivatives, and when this puts us in a position to conjecture his repressed unconscious material and to extend, by the information we give him, his ego's knowledge of his unconscious.

But it is far from being the case that his ego is content to play the part of passively and obediently bringing us the material we require and of believing and accepting our translation of it. A number of other things happen, a few of which we might have foreseen but others of which are bound to surprise us. The most remarkable thing is this. The patient is not satisfied with regarding the analyst in the light of reality as a helper and adviser who, moreover, is remunerated for the trouble he takes and who would himself be content with some such role as that of a guide on a difficult mountain climb. On the contrary, the patient sees in him the return, the reincarnation, of some important figure out of his childhood or past, and consequently transfers on to him feelings and reactions which undoubtedly applied to this prototype. This fact of transference soon proves to be a factor of undreamt-of importance, on the one hand an instrument of irreplaceable value and on the

other hand a source of serious dangers. This transference is *ambivalent*: it comprises positive (affectionate) as well as negative (hostile) attitudes towards the analyst, who as a rule is put in the place of one or other of the patient's parents, his father or mother. So long as it is positive it serves us admirably. It alters the whole analytic situation, it pushes to one side the patient's rational aim of becoming healthy and free from his ailments. Instead of it there emerges the aim of pleasing the analyst and of winning his applause and love. It becomes the true motive force of the patient's collaboration; his weak ego becomes strong; under its influence he achieves things that would ordinarily be beyond his power; he leaves off his symptoms and seems apparently to have recovered merely for the sake of the analyst. The analyst may shamefacedly admit to himself that he set out on a difficult undertaking without any suspicion of the extraordinary powers that would be at his command.

Moreover, the relation of transference brings with it two further advantages. If the patient puts the analyst in the place of his father or mother,, he is also giving him the power which his super-ego exercises over his ego, since his parents were, as we know, the origin of his super-ego. The new super-ego now has an opportunity for a sort of *after-education* of the neurotic; it can correct mistakes for which his parents were responsible in educating him. But at this point a warning must be given against misusing this new influence. However much the analyst may be tempted to become a teacher, model and ideal for other people and to create men in his own image, he should not forget that that is not his task in the analytic relationship, and indeed that he will be disloyal to his task if he allows himself to be led on by his inclinations. If he does, he will only be repeating a mistake of the parents who crushed their child's independence by their influence, and he will only be replacing the patient's earlier dependence by a new one. In all his attempts at improving and educating the patient the analyst should respect his individuality. The amount of influence which he may legitimately allow himself will be determined by the degree of developmental inhibition present in the patient. Some neurotics have remained so infantile that in analysis too they can only be treated as children.

Another advantage of transference, too, is that in it the

patient produces before us with plastic clarity an important part of his life-story, of which he would otherwise have probably given us only an insufficient account. He acts it before us, as it were, instead of reporting it to us.

And now for the other side of the situation. Since the transference reproduces the patient's relation with his parents, it takes over the ambivalence of that relation as well. It almost inevitably happens that one day his positive attitude towards the analyst changes over into the negative, hostile one. This too is as a rule a repetition of the past. His obedience to his father (if it is his father that is in question), his courting of his father's favour, had its roots in an erotic wish directed towards him. Some time or other that demand will press its way forward in the transference as well and insist on being satisfied. In the analytic situation it can only meet with frustration. Real sexual relations between patients and analysts are out of the question, and even the subtler methods of satisfaction, such as the giving of preference, intimacy and so on, are only sparingly granted by the analyst. A rejection of this kind is taken as the occasion for the change-over; probably things happened in the same way in the patient's childhood.

The therapeutic successes that occurred under the sway of the positive transference are open to the suspicion of being of a *suggestive* nature. If the negative transference gains the upper hand, they are blown away like chaff before the wind. We observe with horror that all our trouble and labour hitherto have been in vain. Indeed, what we might have regarded as a permanent intellectual gain by the patient, his understanding of psycho-analysis and his reliance on its efficacy, suddenly vanish. He behaves like a child who has no power of judgement of his own but blindly believes anyone whom he loves and no one who is a stranger to him. The danger of these states of transference evidently lies in the patient's misunderstanding their nature and taking them for fresh real experiences instead of reflections of the past. If he (or she) becomes aware of the strong erotic desire that lies concealed behind the positive transference, he believes that he has fallen passionately in love; if the transference changes over, then he feels insulted and neglected, he hates the analyst as his enemy and is ready to abandon the analysis. In both these extreme cases he has forgotten the pact that he made at the beginning of the treatment

and has become useless for continuing the common work. It is the analyst's task constantly to tear the patient out of his menacing illusion and to show him again and again that what he takes to be new real life is a reflection of the past. And lest he should fall into a state in which he is inaccessible to all evidence, the analyst takes care that neither the love nor the hostility reach an extreme height. This is effected by preparing him in good time for these possibilities and by not overlooking the first signs of them. Careful handling of the transference on these lines is as a rule richly rewarded. If we succeed, as we usually can, in enlightening the patient on the true nature of the phenomena of transference, we shall have struck a powerful weapon out of the hand of his resistance and shall have converted dangers into gains. For a patient never forgets again what he has experienced in the form of transference; it carries a greater force of conviction than anything he can acquire in other ways.

We think it most undesirable if the patient *acts* outside the transference instead of remembering. The ideal conduct for our purposes would be that he should behave as normally as possible outside the treatment and express his abnormal reactions only in the transference.

The method by which we strengthen the weakened ego has as a starting-point an extending of its self-knowledge. That is not, of course, the whole story but it is a first step. The loss of such knowledge signifies for the ego a surrender of power and influence; it is the first tangible sign that it is being hemmed in and hampered by the demands of the id and the super-ego. Accordingly, the first part of the help we have to offer is intellectual work on our side and encouragement to the patient to collaborate in it. This first kind of activity, as we know, is intended to pave the way to another, more difficult, task. We shall not lose sight of the dynamic element in this task, even during its preliminary stage. We gather the material for our work from a variety of sources — from what is conveyed to us by the information given us by the patient and by his free associations, from what he shows us in his transferences, from what we arrive at by interpreting his dreams and from what he betrays by his slips or *parapraxes*. All this material helps us to make constructions about what happened to him and has been forgotten as well as about what is happening in him now

without his understanding it. But in all this we never fail to make a strict distinction between *our* knowledge and *his* knowledge. We avoid telling him at once things that we have often discovered at an early stage, and we avoid telling him the whole of what we think we have discovered. We reflect carefully over when we shall impart the knowledge of one of our constructions to him and we wait for what seems to us the suitable moment—which it is not always easy to decide. As a rule we put off telling him of a construction or explanation till he himself has so nearly arrived at it that only a single step remains to be taken, though that step is in fact the decisive synthesis. If we proceeded in another way and overwhelmed him with our interpretations before he was prepared for them, our information would either produce no effect or it would provoke a violent outbreak of *resistance* which would make the progress of our work more difficult or might even threaten to stop it altogether. But if we have prepared everything properly, it often happens that the patient will at once confirm our construction and himself recollect the internal or external event which he had forgotten. The more exactly the construction coincides with the details of what has been forgotten the easier will it be for him to assent. On that particular matter *our* knowledge will then have become *his* knowledge as well.

With the mention of resistance we have reached the second and more important part of our task. We have already learnt that the ego protects itself against the invasion of undesired elements from the unconscious and repressed id by means of anticathexes, which must remain intact if it is to function normally. The more hard-pressed the ego feels, the more convulsively it clings (as though in a fright) to these anticathexes, in order to protect what remains of itself from further irruptions. But this defensive purpose does not by any means accord with the aims of our treatment. What we desire, on the contrary, is that the ego, emboldened by the certainty of our help, shall dare to take the offensive in order to reconquer what has been lost. And it is here that we become aware of the strength of these anticathexes in the form of *resistances* to our work. The ego draws back in alarm from such undertakings, which seem dangerous and threaten unpleasure; it must be constantly encouraged and soothed if it is not to fail us. This resistance, which persists throughout the whole treatment and is renewed

at every fresh piece of work, is known, not quite correctly, as the *resistance due to repression*. We shall find that it is not the only one that faces us. It is interesting to notice that in this situation the party-divisions are to some extent reversed: for the ego struggles against our instigation, while the unconscious, which is ordinarily our opponent, comes to our help, since it has a natural 'upward drive' and desires nothing better than to press forward across its settled frontiers into the ego and so to consciousness. The struggle which develops, if we gain our end and can induce the ego to overcome its resistances, is carried through under our direction and with our assistance. Its outcome is a matter of indifference whether it results in the ego accepting, after a fresh examination, an instinctual demand which it has hitherto rejected, or whether it dismisses it once more, this time for good and all. In either case a permanent danger has been disposed of, the compass of the ego has been extended and a wasteful expenditure of energy has been made unnecessary.

The overcoming of resistances is the part of our work that requires the most time and the greatest trouble. It is worth while, however, for it brings about an advantageous alteration of the ego which will be maintained independently of the outcome of the transference and will hold good in life. We have also worked simultaneously at getting rid of the alteration of the ego which had been brought about under the influence of the unconscious; for whenever we have been able to detect any of its derivatives in the ego we have pointed out their illegitimate origin and have instigated the ego to reject them. It will be remembered that it was one of the necessary preconditions of our pact of assistance that any such alteration of the ego due to the intrusion of unconscious elements should not have gone beyond a certain amount.

The further our work proceeds and the more deeply our insight penetrates into the mental life of neurotics, the more clearly two new factors force themselves on our notice, which demand the closest attention as sources of resistance. Both of them are completely unknown to the patient, neither of them could be taken into account when our pact was made; nor do they arise from the patient's ego. They may both be embraced under the single name of 'need to be ill or to suffer', but they have different origins though in other respects they are of a kindred nature. The first of these two factors is the sense of

guilt or consciousness of guilt, as it is called, though the patient does not feel it and is not aware of it. It is evidently the portion of the resistance contributed by a super-ego that has become particularly severe and cruel. The patient must not become well but must remain ill, for he deserves no better. This resistance does not actually interfere with our intellectual work, but it makes it inoperative; indeed, it often allows us to remove one form of neurotic suffering, but is ready at once to replace it by another, or perhaps by some somatic illness. The sense of guilt also explains the cure or improvement of severe neuroses which we occasionally observe after real misfortunes: all that matters is that the patient should be miserable—in what way is of no consequence. The uncomplaining resignation with which such people often put up with their hard fate is most remarkable, but also revealing. In warding off this resistance we are obliged to restrict ourselves to making it conscious and attempting to bring about the slow demolition of the hostile super-ego.

It is less easy to demonstrate the existence of another resistance, our means of combating which are specially inadequate. There are some neurotics in whom, to judge by all their reactions, the instinct of self-preservation has actually been reversed. They seem to aim at nothing other than self-injury and self-destruction. It is possible too that the people who in fact do in the end commit suicide belong to this group. It is to be assumed that in such people far-reaching defusions of instinct have taken place, as a result of which there has been a liberation of excessive quantities of the destructive instinct directed inwards. Patients of this kind are not able to tolerate recovery through our treatment and fight against it with all their strength. But we must confess that this is a case which we have not yet succeeded in completely explaining.

Let us once more glance over the situation which we have reached in our attempt at bringing help to the patient's neurotic ego. That ego is no longer able to fulfil the task set it by the external world (including human society). Not all of its experiences are at its disposal, a large proportion of its store of memories have escaped it. Its activity is inhibited by strict prohibitions from the super-ego, its energy is consumed in vain attempts at fending off the demands of the id. Beyond this, as a result of continuous irruptions by the id, its organization is impaired, it is no longer capable of any proper synthesis, it is

torn by mutually opposed urges, by unsettled conflicts and by unsolved doubts. To start with, we get the patient's thus weakened ego to take part in the purely intellectual work of interpretation, which aims at provisionally filling the gaps in his mental assets, and to transfer to us the authority of his super-ego; we encourage it to take up the struggle over each individual demand made by the id and to conquer the resistances which arise in connection with it. At the same time we restore order in the ego by detecting the material and urges which have forced their way in from the unconscious, and expose them to criticism by tracing them back to their origin. We serve the patient in various functions, as an authority and a substitute for his parents, as a teacher and educator; and we have done the best for him if, as analysts, we raise the mental processes in his ego to a normal level, transform what has become unconscious and repressed into preconscious material and thus return it once more to the possession of his ego. On the patient's side a few rational factors work in our favour, such as the need for recovery which has its motive in his sufferings, and the intellectual interest that we may awaken in him in the theories and revelations of psycho-analysis; but of far greater force is the positive transference with which he meets us. Fighting against us, on the other hand, are the negative transference, the ego's resistance due to repression (that is, its displeasure at having to lay itself open to the hard work imposed on it), the sense of guilt arising from its relation to the super-ego and the need to be ill due to deep-going changes in the economics of his[1] instincts. The share taken by the last two factors decides whether the case is to be regarded as slight or severe. Apart from these, a few other factors may be discerned as having a favourable or unfavourable bearing. A certain psychical inertia, a sluggishness of the libido, which is unwilling to abandon its fixations, cannot be welcome to us, the patient's capacity for sublimating his instincts plays a large part and so does his capacity for rising above the crude life of the instincts, so, too, does the relative power of his intellectual functions.

We shall not be disappointed, but, on the contrary, we shall find it entirely intelligible, if we reach the conclusion that the final outcome of the struggle we have engaged in depends on

[1] ['*Seiner*.' This can be either 'its' or 'his', it seems much more likely to refer to the person as a whole rather than to the ego.]

quantitative relations—on the quota of energy we are able to mobilize in the patient to our advantage as compared with the sum of energy of the powers working against us. Here once again God is on the side of the big battalions. It is true that we do not always succeed in winning, but at least we can usually recognize why we have not won. Those who have been following our discussion only out of therapeutic interest will perhaps turn away in contempt after this admission. But here we are concerned with therapy only in so far as it works by psychological means; and for the time being we have no other. The future may teach us to exercise a direct influence, by means of particular chemical substances, on the amounts of energy and their distribution in the mental apparatus. It may be that there are other still undreamt-of possibilities of therapy. But for the moment we have nothing better at our disposal than the technique of psycho-analysis, and for that reason, in spite of its limitations, it should not be despised.

Chapter VII

AN EXAMPLE OF PSYCHO-ANALYTIC WORK

We have arrived at a general acquaintance with the psychical apparatus, with the parts, organs and agencies of which it is composed, with the forces which operate in it and with the functions allotted to its parts. The neuroses and psychoses are the states in which disturbances in the functioning of the apparatus come to expression. We have chosen the neuroses as the subjects of our study because they alone seem accessible to the psychological methods of our intervention. While we are trying to influence them, we collect observations which give us a picture of their origin and of the manner in which they arise.

I will state in advance one of our chief findings before proceeding with my description. The neuroses — unlike infectious diseases, for instance — have no specific determinants. It would be idle to seek in them for pathogenic excitants. They shade off by easy transitions into what is described as the normal; and, on the other hand, there is scarcely any state recognized as normal in which indications of neurotic traits could not be pointed out. Neurotics have approximately the same innate dispositions as other people, they have the same experiences and they have the same tasks to perform. Why is it, then, that they live so much worse and with so much greater difficulty and, in the process, suffer more feelings of unpleasure, anxiety and pain?

We need not be at a loss to find an answer to this question. Quantitative *disharmonies* are what must be held responsible for the inadequacy and sufferings of neurotics. The determining cause of all the forms taken by human mental life, is, indeed, to be sought in the reciprocal action between innate dispositions and accidental experiences. Now a particular instinct may be too strong or too weak innately, or a particular capacity may be stunted or insufficiently developed in life. On the other hand, external impressions and experiences may make demands of differing strength on different people, and what one person's constitution can deal with may prove an unmanageable task

for another's. These quantitative differences will determine the variety of the results.

We shall very soon feel, however, that this explanation is unsatisfactory: it is too general, it explains too much. The aetiology put forward applies to every case of mental suffering, misery and disablement, but not every such state can be termed neurotic. The neuroses have specific characteristics, they are miseries of a particular kind. So we must after all expect to find particular causes for them. Or we may adopt the supposition that, among the tasks with which mental life has to deal, there are a few on which it can especially easily come to grief; so that the peculiarity of the phenomena of neurosis, which are often so very remarkable, would follow from this without our needing to withdraw our earlier assertions. If it remains true that the neuroses do not differ in any essential respect from the normal, their study promises to yield us valuable contributions to our knowledge of the normal. It may be that we shall thus discover the 'weak points' in a normal organization.

The supposition we have just made finds confirmation. Analytic experiences teach us that there is in fact one instinctual demand attempts to deal with which most easily fail or succeed imperfectly and that there is one period of life which comes in question exclusively or predominantly in connection with the generation of a neurosis. These two factors — the nature of the instinct and the period of life concerned — call for separate consideration, although they are closely enough connected.

We can speak with a fair degree of certainty about the part played by the period of life. It seems that neuroses are acquired only in early childhood (up to the age of six), even though their symptoms may not make their appearance till much later. The childhood neurosis may become manifest for a short time or may even be overlooked. In every case the later neurotic illness links up with the prelude in childhood. It is possible that what are known as traumatic neuroses (due to excessive fright or severe somatic shocks, such as railway collisions, burial under falls of earth, and so on) are an exception to this: their relations to determinants in childhood have hitherto eluded investigation. There is no difficulty in accounting for this aetiological preference for the first period of childhood. The neuroses are, as we know, disorders of the ego; and it is not to be wondered at if the ego, so long as it is feeble, immature and incapable of

resistance, fails to deal with tasks which it could cope with later on with the utmost ease. In these circumstances instinctual demands from within, no less than excitations from the external world, operate as 'traumas', particularly if they are met half-way by certain innate dispositions. The helpless ego fends them off by means of attempts at flight (*repression*), which later turn out to be inefficient and which involve permanent restrictions on further development. The damage inflicted on the ego by its first experiences gives us the appearance of being disproportionately great; but we have only to take as an analogy the differences in the results produced by the prick of a needle into a mass of cells in the act of cell-division (as in Roux's experiments) and into the fully grown animal which eventually develops out of them.[1] No human individual is spared such traumatic experiences; none escapes the repressions to which they give rise. These questionable reactions on the part of the ego may perhaps be indispensible for the attainment of another aim which is set for the same period of life: in the space of a few years the little primitive creature must turn into a civilized human being; he must pass through an immensely long stretch of human cultural development in an almost uncannily abbreviated form. This is made possible by hereditary disposition; but it can almost never be achieved without the additional help of upbringing, of parental influence, which, as a precursor of the super-ego, restricts the ego's activity by prohibitions and punishments, and encourages or compels the setting-up of repressions. We must therefore not forget to include the influence of civilization among the determinants of neurosis. It is easy, as we can see, for a barbarian to be healthy; for a civilized man the task is hard. The desire for a powerful, uninhibited ego may seem to us intelligible; but, as we are taught by the times we live in, it is in the profoundest sense hostile to civilization. And since the demands of civilization are represented by family upbringing, we must bear in mind the part played by this biological characteristic of the human species—the prolonged period of its childhood dependence—in the aetiology of the neuroses.

As regards the other point—the specific instinctual factor—we come upon an interesting discrepancy between theory and

[1] [Wilhelm Roux (1850–1924) was one of the founders of experimental embryology.]

experience. Theoretically there is no objection to supposing that any sort of instinctual demand might occasion the same repressions and their consequences; but our observation shows us invariably, so far as we can judge, that the excitations that play this pathogenic part arise from the component instincts of sexual life. The symptoms of neuroses are, it might be said, without exception either a substitutive satisfaction of some sexual urge or measures to prevent such a satisfaction; and as a rule they are compromises between the two, of the kind that come about in accordance with the laws operating between contraries in the unconscious. The gap in our theory cannot at present be filled; our decision is made more difficult by the fact that most of the urges of sexual life are not of a purely erotic nature but have arisen from alloys of the erotic instinct with portions of the destructive instinct. But it cannot be doubted that the instincts which manifest themselves physiologically as sexuality play a prominent, unexpectedly large part in the causation of the neuroses—whether it is an exclusive one remains to be decided. It must also be borne in mind that in the course of cultural development no other function has been so energetically and extensively repudiated as precisely the sexual one. Theory must rest satisfied with a few hints that betray a deeper connection: the fact that the first period of childhood, during which the ego begins to be differentiated from the id, is also the period of the early sexual efflorescence which is brought to an end by the period of latency, that it can hardly be a matter of chance that this momentous early period subsequently falls a victim to infantile amnesia; and lastly, that biological changes in sexual life—such as the function's diphasic onset which we have already mentioned, the disappearance of the periodic character of sexual excitation and the transformation in the relation between female menstruation and male excitation—that these innovations in sexuality must have been of high importance in the evolution of animals up to man. It is left for the science of the future to bring these still isolated data together into a new understanding. It is not in psychology but in biology that there is a gap here. We shall not be wrong, perhaps, in saying that the weak point in the ego's organization seems to lie in its attitude to the sexual function, as though the biological antithesis between self-preservation and the preservation of the species had found a psychological expression at that point.

Analytic experience has convinced us of the complete truth of the assertion so often to be heard that the child is psychologically father to the adult and that the events of his first years are of paramount importance for his whole later life. It will thus be of special interest to us if there is something that may be described as the central experience of this period of childhood. Our attention is first attracted by the effects of certain influences which do not apply to all children, though they are common enough—such as the sexual abuse of children by adults, their seduction by other children (brothers or sisters) slightly their seniors, and, what we should not expect, their being deeply stirred by seeing or hearing at first hand sexual behaviour between adults (their parents) mostly at a time at which one would not have thought they could either be interested in or understand any such impressions, or be capable of remembering them later. It is easy to confirm the extent to which such experiences arouse a child's susceptibility and force his own sexual urges into certain channels from which they cannot afterwards depart. Since these impressions are subjected to repression either at once or as soon as they seek to return as memories, they constitute the determinant for the neurotic compulsion which will subsequently make it impossible for the ego to control the sexual function and will probably cause it to turn away from that function permanently. If this latter reaction occurs, the result will be a neurosis; if it is absent, a variety of perversions will develop, or the function, which is of immense importance not only for reproduction but also for the entire shaping of life, will become totally unmanageable.

However instructive cases of this kind may be, a still higher degree of interest must attach to the influence of a situation which every child is destined to pass through and which follows inevitably from the factor of the prolonged period during which a child is cared for by other people and lives with his parents. I am thinking of the *Oedipus complex*, so named because its essential substance is to be found in the Greek legend of King Oedipus, which has fortunately been preserved for us in a version by a great dramatist. The Greek hero killed his father and took his mother to wife. That he did so unwittingly, since he did not know them as his parents, is a deviation from the analytic facts which we can easily understand and which, indeed, we shall recognize as inevitable.

At this point we must give separate accounts of the development of boys and girls (of males and females), for it is now that the difference between the sexes finds psychological expression for the first time. We are faced here by the great enigma of the biological fact of the duality of the sexes: it is an ultimate fact for our knowledge, it defies every attempt to trace it back to something else. Psycho-analysis has contributed nothing to clearing up this problem, which clearly falls wholly within the province of biology. In mental life we only find reflections of this great antithesis, and their interpretation is made more difficult by the fact, long suspected, that no individual is limited to the modes of reaction of a single sex but always finds some room for those of the opposite one, just as his body bears, alongside of the fully developed organs of one sex, atrophied and often useless rudiments of those of the other. For distinguishing between male and female in mental life we make use of what is obviously an inadequate empirical and conventional equation: we call everything that is strong and active male, and everything that is weak and passive female. This fact of psychological bisexuality, too, embarrasses all our enquiries into the subject and makes them harder to describe.

As child's first erotic object is the mother's breast that nourishes it, love has its origin in attachment to the satisfied need for nourishment. There is no doubt that, to begin with, the child does not distinguish between the breast and its own body; when the breast has to be separated from the body and shifted to the '*outside*' because the child so often finds it absent, it carries with it as an '*object*' a part of the original narcissistic libidinal cathexis. This first object is later completed into the person of the child's mother, who not only nourishes it but also looks after it and thus arouses in it a number of other physical sensations, pleasurable and unpleasurable. By her care of the child's body she becomes its first seducer. In these two relations lies the root of a mother's importance, unique, without parallel, established unalterably for a whole lifetime as the first and strongest love-object and as the prototype of all later love-relations - for both sexes. In all this the phylogenetic foundation has so much the upper hand over personal accidental experience that it makes no difference whether a child has really sucked at the breast or has been brought up on the bottle and never enjoyed the tenderness of a mother's care. In both cases the child's develop-

ment takes the same path; it may be that in the second case its later longing grows all the greater. And for however long it is fed at its mother's breast, it will always be left with a conviction after it has been weaned that its feeding was too short and too little.

This preface is not superfluous, for it can heighten our realization of the intensity of the Oedipus complex. When a boy from the age of two or three, has entered the phallic phase of his libidinal development, is feeling pleasurable sensations in his sexual organ and has learnt to procure these at will by manual stimulation, he becomes his mother's lover. He wishes to possess her physically in such ways as he has divined from his observations and intuitions about sexual life, and he tries to seduce her by showing her the male organ which he is proud to own. In a word, his early awakened masculinity seeks to take his father's place with her; his father has hitherto in any case been an envied model to the boy, owing to the physical strength he perceives in him and the authority with which he finds him clothed. His father now becomes a rival who stands in his way and whom he would like to get rid of. If while his father is away he is allowed to share his mother's bed and if when his father returns he is once more banished from it, his satisfaction when his father disappears and his disappointment when he emerges again are deeply felt experiences. This is the subject of the Oedipus complex, which the Greek legend has translated from the world of a child's phantasy into pretended reality. Under the conditions of our civilization it is invariably doomed to a frightening end.

The boy's mother has understood quite well that his sexual excitation relates to herself. Sooner or later she reflects that it is not right to allow it to continue. She thinks she is doing the correct thing in forbidding him to handle his genital organ. Her prohibition has little effect, at the most it brings about some modification in his method of obtaining satisfaction. At last his mother adopts the severest measures, she threatens to take away from him the thing he is defying her with. Usually, in order to make the threat more frightening and more [illegible] she delegates its execution to the boy's father, saying that she will tell him and that he will cut the penis off. Strange to say, this threat operates only if another condition is fulfilled before or afterwards. In itself it seems too inconceivable to the boy that

such a thing could happen. But if at the time of the threat he can recall the appearance of female genitals or if shortly afterwards he has a sight of them —of genitals, that is to say, which really lack this supremely valued part, then he takes what he has heard seriously and, coming under the influence of the *castration complex*, experiences the severest trauma of his young life.[1]

The results of the threat of castration are multifarious and incalculable, they affect the whole of a boy's relations with his father and mother and subsequently with men and women in general. As a rule the child's masculinity is unable to stand up to this first shock. In order to preserve his sexual organ he renounces the possession of his mother more or less completely; his sexual life often remains permanently encumbered by the prohibition. If a strong feminine component, as we call it, is present in him, its strength is increased by this intimidation of his masculinity. He falls into a passive attitude to his father, such as he attributes to his mother. It is true that as a result of the threat he has given up masturbation, but not the activities of his imagination accompanying it. On the contrary, since these are now the only form of sexual satisfaction remaining to him, he indulges in them more than before and in these phantasies, though he still continues to identify himself with his father, he also does so, simultaneously and perhaps predominantly, with his mother. Derivatives and modified products of these early masturbatory phantasies usually make their way into his later ego and play a part in the formation of his character. Apart from this encouragement of his femininity, fear and hatred of his father gain greatly in intensity. The boy's masculinity withdraws, as it were, into a defiant attitude towards his father, which will dominate his later behaviour in human

[1] Castration has a place too in the Oedipus legend, for the blinding with which Oedipus punishes himself after the discovery of his crimes is, by the evidence of dreams, a symbolic substitute for castration. The possibility cannot be excluded that a phylogenetic memory-trace may contribute to the extraordinarily terrifying effect of the threat—a memory-trace from the prehistory of the primal family when the jealous father actually robbed his son of his genitals if the latter became troublesome to him as a rival with a woman. The primaeval custom of circumcision, another symbolic substitute for castration, can only be understood as an expression of submission to the father's will. (Cf. the puberty rites of primitive peoples.) No investigation has yet been made of the form taken by the events described above among peoples and in civilizations which do not suppress masturbation in children.

society in a compulsive fashion. A residue of his erotic fixation to his mother is often left in the form of an excessive dependence on her, and this persists as a kind of bondage to women.[1] He no longer ventures to love his mother, but he cannot risk not being loved by her, for in that case he would be in danger of being betrayed by her to his father and handed over to castration. The whole experience, with all its antecedents and consequences, of which my account has only been able to give a selection, is subjected to a highly energetic repression, and, as is made possible by the laws operating in the unconscious id, all the mutually contending emotional impulses and reactions which are set going at that time are preserved in the unconscious and ready to disturb the later development of the ego after puberty. When the somatic process of sexual maturation puts fresh life into the old libidinal fixations which had apparently been surmounted, sexual life will turn out to be inhibited, without homogeneity and fallen apart into mutually conflicting urges.

It is no doubt true that the impact of the threat of castration upon a boy's budding sexual life does not always have these dreaded consequences. It will depend once again on *quantitative* relations how much damage is done and how much avoided. The whole occurrence, which may probably be regarded as the central experience of the years of childhood, the greatest problem of early life and the strongest source of later inadequacy, is so completely forgotten that its reconstruction during the work of analysis is met in adults by the most decided disbelief. Indeed, aversion to it is so great that people try to silence any mention of the proscribed subject and the most obvious reminders of it are overlooked by a strange intellectual blindness. One may hear it objected, for instance, that the legend of King Oedipus has in fact no connection with the construction made by analysis: the cases are quite different, since Oedipus did not know that it was his father that he killed and his mother that he married. What is overlooked in this is that a distortion of this kind is inevitable if an attempt is made at a poetic handling of the material, and that there is no introduction of extraneous material but only a skilful employment of the factors presented by the theme. The ignorance of Oedipus is a legitimate representation of the unconscious state

[1] [Cf. a footnote to Section VIII of 'Analysis Terminable and Interminable' (1937*c*), p. 252 below.]

into which, for adults, the whole experience has fallen; and the coercive power of the oracle, which makes or should make the hero innocent, is a recognition of the inevitability of the fate which has condemned every son to live through the Oedipus complex. Again it was pointed out from psycho-analytic quarters how easily the riddle of another dramatic hero, Shakespeare's procrastinator, Hamlet, can be solved by reference to the Oedipus complex, since the prince came to grief over the task of punishing someone else for what coincided with the substance of his own Oedipus wish—whereupon the general lack of understanding on the part of the literary world showed how ready is the mass of mankind to hold fast to its infantile repressions.[1]

Yet more than a century before the emergence of psycho-analysis the French philosopher Diderot bore witness to the importance of the Oedipus complex by expressing the difference between the primitive and civilized worlds in this sentence: 'Si le petit sauvage etait abandonné a lui-même, qu'il conservât toute son imbecillite, et qu'il reunit au peu de raison de l'enfant au berceau la violence des passions de l'homme de trente ans, il tordrait le col à son père et coucherait avec sa mere.'[2] I venture to say that if psycho-analysis could boast of no other

[1] The name 'William Shakespeare' is very probably a pseudonym behind which a great unknown has concealed Edward de Vere, Earl of Oxford, a man who has been thought to be identifiable with the author of Shakespeare's works, lost a beloved and admired father while he was still a boy and completely repudiated his mother, who contracted a new marriage very soon after her husband's death. Freud's first mention of this view was in a sentence added in 1930 to a footnote to Chapter V D of *The Interpretation of Dreams* (1900*a*), *Standard Ed.*, **4**, 265 *n*. He enlarged on the point in his 'Address in the Goethe House' (1930*e*), ibid., **21**, 211, as well as in a footnote added in 1935 to his *Autobiographical Study* (1925*d*), ibid., 20, 64 *n*. He referred to it once more in a footnote to Section A of Part I of the Third Essay in *Moses and Monotheism* (1939*a*), p. 63 *n* above. A long argument in favour of this opinion is contained in a letter written by Freud to J. S. H. Bronson on March 21, 1934, which is published in Appendix A, No. 27, to the third volume of Jones's biography (1957, 487–8).]

[2] ['If the] little savage were left to himself preserving all his foolishness and bringing to the small sense of a child in the cradle the violent passions of a man of thirty, he would strangle his father and lie with his mother.' From *Le neveu de Rameau*. Freud had quoted this twice already. Cf. Lecture XXI of his *Introductory Lectures* (1916–17), *Standard Ed.*, **16**, 337–8.]

achievement than the discovery of the repressed Oedipus complex, that alone would give it a claim to be included among the precious new acquisitions of mankind.

The effects of the castration complex in little girls are more uniform and no less profound. A female child has, of course, no need to fear the loss of a penis; she must, however, react to the fact of not having received one. From the very first she envies boys its possession; her whole development may be said to take place under the colours of envy for the penis. She begins by making vain attempts to do the same as boys and later, with greater success, makes efforts to compensate for her defect—efforts which may lead in the end to a normal feminine attitude. If during the phallic phase she tries to get pleasure like a boy by the manual stimulation of her genitals, it often happens that she fails to obtain sufficient satisfaction and extends her judgement of inferiority from her stunted penis to her whole self. As a rule she soon gives up masturbating, since she has no wish to be reminded of the superiority of her brother or playmate, and turns away from sexuality altogether.

If a little girl persists in her first wish—to grow into a boy—in extreme cases she will end as a manifest homosexual, and otherwise she will exhibit markedly masculine traits in the conduct of her later life, will choose a masculine vocation, and so on. The other path leads by way of abandoning the mother she has loved: the daughter, under the influence of her envy for the penis, cannot forgive her mother for having sent her into the world so insufficiently equipped. In her resentment over this she gives up her mother and puts someone else in her place as the object of her love—her father. If one has lost a love-object, the most obvious reaction is to identify oneself with it, to replace it from within, as it were, by identification. This mechanism now comes to the little girl's help. Identification with her mother can take the place of attachment to her mother. The little daughter puts herself in her mother's place, as she has always done in her games; she tries to take her mother's place with her father, and begins to hate the mother she used to love, and from two motives: from jealousy as well as from mortification over the penis she has been denied. Her new relation to her father may start by having as its content a wish to have his penis at her disposal, but it culminates in another wish—to have a baby from him as a gift. The wish for a baby

has thus taken the place of the wish for a penis, or has at all events split off from it.

It is an interesting thing that the relation between the Oedipus complex and the castration complex should take such a different shape—an opposite one, in fact in the case of females as compared to that of males. In males, as we have seen, the threat of castration brings the Oedipus complex to an end; in females we find that, on the contrary, it is their lack of a penis that forces them into their Oedipus complex. It does little harm to a woman if she remains in her feminine Oedipus attitude. (The term 'Electra complex' has been proposed for it.[1]) She will in that case choose her husband for his paternal characteristics and be ready to recognize his authority. Her longing to possess a penis, which is in fact unappeasable, may find satisfaction if she can succeed in completing her love for the organ by extending it to the bearer of the organ, just as happened earlier when she progressed from her mother's breast to her mother as a whole person.

If we ask an analyst what his experience has shown to be the mental structures least accessible to influence in his patients, the answer will be: in a woman her wish for a penis, in a man his feminine attitude towards his own sex, a precondition of which would, of course, be the loss of his penis.[2]

[1] [The term seems to have been used first by Jung (1913, 370). Freud argued against its introduction in his paper on 'Female Sexuality' (1931*b*), *Standard Ed.*, **21**, 229.]

[2] [Freud had discussed this at much greater length in Section VIII of 'Analysis Terminable and Interminable' (1937*c*), p. 250 ff. below.]

PART III

THE THEORETICAL YIELD

Chapter VIII

THE PSYCHICAL APPARATUS AND THE EXTERNAL WORLD

All of the general discoveries and hypotheses which I brought forward in the first chapter were, of course, arrived at by laborious and patient detailed work of the kind of which I have given an example in the previous chapter. We may now feel tempted to make a survey of the increases in knowledge that we have achieved by work such as this and to consider what paths we have opened for further advances. In this connection we may be struck by the fact that we have so often been obliged to venture beyond the frontiers of the science of psychology. The phenomena with which we were dealing do not belong to psychology alone; they have an organic and biological side as well, and accordingly in the course of our efforts at building up psycho-analysis we have also made some important biological discoveries and have not been able to avoid framing new biological hypotheses.

But let us for the moment keep to psychology. We have seen that it is not scientifically feasible to draw a line of demarcation between what is psychically normal and abnormal, so that that distinction, in spite of its practical importance, possesses only a conventional value. We have thus established a right to arrive at an understanding of the normal life of the mind from a study of its disorders — which would not be admissible if these pathological states, neuroses and psychoses, had specific causes operating in the manner of foreign bodies.

The study of a mental disorder occurring during sleep, which is transient and harmless and which, indeed, performs a useful function, has given us a key to the understanding of the mental diseases which are permanent and injurious to life. And we may now venture on the assertion that the psychology of consciousness

was no better capable of understanding the normal functioning of the mind than of understanding dreams. The data of conscious self-perception, which alone were at its disposal, have proved in every respect inadequate to fathom the profusion and complexity of the processes of the mind, to reveal their interconnections and so to recognize the determinants of their disturbances.

The hypothesis we have adopted of a psychical apparatus extended in space, expediently put together, developed by the exigencies of life, which gives rise to the phenomena of consciousness only at one particular point and under certain conditions—this hypothesis has put us in a position to establish psychology on foundations similar to those of any other science, such, for instance, as physics. In our science as in the others the problem is the same: behind the attributes (qualities) of the object under examination which are presented directly to our perception, we have to discover something else which is more independent of the particular receptive capacity of our sense organs and which approximates more closely to what may be supposed to be the real state of affairs. We have no hope of being able to reach the latter itself, since it is evident that everything new that we have inferred must nevertheless be translated back into the language of our perceptions, from which it is simply impossible for us to free ourselves. But herein lies the very nature and limitation of our science. It is as though we were to say in physics: 'If we could see clearly enough we should find that what appears to be a solid body is made up of particles of such and such a shape and size and occupying such and such relative positions.' In the meantime we try to increase the efficiency of our sense organs to the farthest possible extent by artificial aids; but it may be expected that all such efforts will fail to affect the ultimate outcome. Reality will always remain 'unknowable'. The yield brought to light by scientific work from our primary sense perceptions will consist in an insight into connections and dependent relations which are present in the external world, which can somehow be faithfully reproduced or reflected in the internal world of our thought and a knowledge of which enables us to 'understand' something in the external world, to foresee it and possibly to alter it. Our procedure in psycho-analysis is quite similar. We have discovered technical methods of filling up the gaps in the phenomena of

our consciousness, and we make use of those methods just as a physicist makes use of experiment. In this manner we infer a number of processes which are in themselves 'unknowable' and interpolate them in those that are conscious to us. And if, for instance, we say: 'At this point an unconscious memory intervened', what that means is 'At this point something occurred of which we are totally unable to form a conception, but which, if it had entered our consciousness, could only have been described in such and such a way.'

Our justification for making such inferences and interpolations and the degree of certainty attaching to them of course remain open to criticism in each individual instance, and it cannot be denied that it is often extremely difficult to arrive at a decision—a fact which finds expression in the lack of agreement among analysts. The novelty of the problem is to blame for this—that is to say, a lack of training. But there is besides this a special factor inherent in the subject itself, for in psychology, unlike physics, we are not always concerned with things which can only arouse a cool scientific interest. Thus we shall not be very greatly surprised if a woman analyst who has not been sufficiently convinced of the intensity of her own wish for a penis also fails to attach proper importance to that factor in her patients. But such sources of error, arising from the personal equation, have no great importance in the long run. If one looks through old text-books on the use of the microscope, one is astonished to find the extraordinary demands which were made on the personality of those who made observations with that instrument while its technique was still young—of all of which there is no question to-day.

I cannot undertake to attempt a complete picture here of the psychical apparatus and its activities, lest I should find myself hindered, among other things, by the circumstance that psychoanalysis has not yet had time to study all these functions equally. I shall therefore content myself with a detailed recapitulation of the account in my opening chapter.

The core of our being, then, is formed by the obscure *id*, which has no direct communication with the external world and is accessible even to our own knowledge only through the medium of another agency. Within the id the organic *instincts* operate, which are themselves compounded of fusions of two primal forces—Eros and destructiveness—in varying proportions

and are differentiated from one another by their relation to organs or systems of organs. The one and only urge of these instincts is towards satisfaction, which is expected to arise from certain changes in the organs with the help of objects in the external world. But immediate and unheeding satisfaction of the instincts, such as the id demands, would often lead to perilous conflicts with the external world and to extinction. The id knows no solicitude about ensuring survival and no anxiety; or it would perhaps be more correct to say that, though it can generate the sensory elements of anxiety, it cannot make use of them. The processes which are possible in and between the assumed psychical elements in the id (the *primary process*) differ widely from those which are familiar to us through conscious perception in our intellectual and emotional life; nor are they subject to the critical restrictions of logic, which repudiates some of these processes as invalid and seeks to undo them.

The id, cut off from the external world, has a world of perception of its own. It detects with extraordinary acuteness certain changes in its interior, especially oscillations in the tension of its instinctual needs, and these changes become conscious as feelings in the pleasure-unpleasure series. It is hard to say, to be sure, by what means and with the help of what sensory terminal organs these perceptions come about. But it is an established fact that self-perceptions—coenaesthetic feelings and feelings of pleasure-unpleasure—govern the passage of events in the id with despotic force. The id obeys the inexorable pleasure principle. But not the id alone. It seems that the activity of the other psychical agencies too is able only to modify the pleasure principle but not to nullify it; and it remains a question of the highest theoretical importance, and one that has not yet been answered, when and how it is ever possible for the pleasure principle to be overcome. The consideration that the pleasure principle demands a reduction, at bottom the extinction perhaps, of the tensions of instinctual needs (that is, *Nirvana*) leads to the still unassessed relations between the pleasure principle and the two primal forces, Eros and the death instinct.

The other agency of the mind, which we believe we know best and in which we recognize ourselves most easily—what is known as the *ego*—has been developed out of the id's cortical layer, which, through being adapted to the reception and

exclusion of stimuli, is in direct contact with the external world (*reality*). Starting from conscious perception it has subjected to its influence ever larger regions and deeper strata of the id, and, in the persistence with which it maintains its dependence on the external world, it bears the indelible stamp of its origin (as it might be 'Made in Germany'[1]). Its psychological function consists in raising the passage [of events] in the id to a higher dynamic level (perhaps by transforming freely mobile energy into bound energy, such as corresponds to the preconscious state); its constructive function consists in interpolating, between the demand made by an instinct and the action that satisfies it, the activity of thought which, after taking its bearings in the present and assessing earlier experiences, endeavours by means of experimental actions to calculate the consequences of the course of action proposed. In this way the ego comes to a decision on whether the attempt to obtain satisfaction is to be carried out or postponed or whether it may not be necessary for the demand by the instinct to be suppressed altogether as being dangerous. Here we have the *reality principle*. Just as the id is directed exclusively to obtaining pleasure, so the ego is governed by considerations of safety. The ego has set itself the task of self-preservation, which the id appears to neglect. It [the ego] makes use of the sensations of anxiety as a signal to give a warning of dangers that threaten its integrity. Since memory-traces can become conscious just as perceptions do, especially through their association with residues of speech, the possibility arises of a confusion which would lead to a mistaking of reality. The ego guards itself against this possibility by the institution of *reality-testing*, which is allowed to fall to abeyance in dreams on account of the conditions prevailing in the state of sleep. The ego, which seeks to maintain itself in an environment of overwhelming mechanical forces, is threatened by dangers which come in the first instance from external reality; but dangers do not threaten it from there alone. Its own id is a source of similar dangers, and that for two different reasons. In the first place, an excessive strength of instinct can damage the ego in a similar way to an excessive 'stimulus' from the external world. It is true that the former cannot destroy it, but it can destroy its characteristic dynamic organization and change the ego back into a portion of the id. In the second place, experience may

[1] [In English in the original.]

have taught the ego that the satisfaction of some instinctual demand which is not in itself intolerable would involve dangers in the external world, so that an instinctual demand of that kind itself becomes a danger. Thus the ego is fighting on two fronts: it has to defend its existence against an external world which threatens it with annihilation as well as against an internal world that makes excessive demands. It adopts the same methods of defence against both, but its defence against the internal enemy is particularly inadequate. As a result of having originally been identical with this latter enemy and of having lived with it since on the most intimate terms, it has great difficulty in escaping from the internal dangers. They persist as threats, even if they can be temporarily held down.

We have heard how the weak and immature ego of the first period of childhood is permanently damaged by the stresses put upon it in its efforts to fend off the dangers that are peculiar to that period of life. Children are protected against the dangers that threaten them from the external world by the solicitude of their parents; they pay for this security by a fear of losing love which would deliver them over helpless to the dangers of the external world. This factor exerts a decisive influence on the outcome of the conflict when a boy finds himself in the situation of the Oedipus complex, in which the threat to his narcissism by the danger of castration, reinforced from primeval sources, takes possession of him. Driven by the combined operation of these two influences, the contemporary real danger and the remembered one with its phylogenetic basis, the child embarks on his attempts at defence—repressions—which are effective for the moment but nevertheless turn out to be psychologically inadequate when the later re-animation of sexual life brings a reinforcement to the instinctual demands which have been repudiated in the past. If this is so, it would have to be said from a biological standpoint that the ego comes to grief over the task of mastering the excitations of the early sexual period, at a time when its immaturity makes it incompetent to do so. It is in this lagging of ego development behind libidinal development that we see the essential precondition of neurosis, and we cannot escape the conclusion that neuroses could be avoided if the childish ego were spared this task—if, that is to say, the child's sexual life were allowed free play, as happens among many primitive peoples. It may be that the autology of

neurotic illnesses is more complicated than we have here described it; if so, we have at least brought out one essential part of the aetiological complex. Nor should we forget the phylogenetic influences, which are represented in some way in the id in forms that we are not yet able to grasp, and which must certainly act upon the ego more powerfully in that early period than later. On the other hand, the realization dawns on us that such an early attempt at damming up the sexual instinct, so decided a partisanship by the young ego in favour of the external as opposed to the internal world, brought about by the prohibition of infantile sexuality, cannot be without its effect on the individual's later readiness for culture.[1] The instinctual demands forced away from direct satisfaction are compelled to enter on new paths leading to substitutive satisfaction, and in the course of these *detours* they may become desexualized and their connection with their original instinctual aims may become looser. And at this point we may anticipate the thesis that many of the highly valued assets of our civilization were acquired at the cost of sexuality and by the restriction of sexual motive forces.

We have repeatedly had to insist on the fact that the ego owes its origin as well as the most important of its acquired characteristics to its relation to the real external world. We are thus prepared to assume that the ego's pathological states, in which it most approximates once again to the id, are founded on a cessation or slackening of that relation to the external world. This tallies very well with what we learn from clinical experience—namely, that the precipitating cause of the outbreak of a psychosis is either that reality has become intolerably painful or that the instincts have become extraordinarily intensified—both of which, in view of the rival claims made on the ego by the id and the external world, must lead to the same result. The problem of psychoses would be simple and perspicuous if the ego's detachment from reality could be carried through completely. But that seems to happen only rarely or perhaps never. Even in a state so far removed from the reality of the external

[1] [The very similar concept of 'susceptibility to culture' had been discussed by Freud at some length in the first section of 'Thoughts for the Times on War and Death.' (1915, *Standard Ed.*, **14**, 283–4) and was also mentioned in *The Future of an Illusion* (1927, ibid., **21**, 10). Freud made no distinction between the use of the words 'culture' and 'civilization'.]

world as one of hallucinatory confusion,[1] one learns from patients after their recovery that at the time in some corner of their mind (as they put it) there was a normal person hidden, who, like a detached spectator, watched the hubbub of illness go past him. I do not know if we may assume that this is so in general, but I can report the same of other psychoses with a less tempestuous course. I call to mind a case of chronic paranoia in which after each attack of jealousy a dream conveyed to the analyst a correct picture of the precipitating cause, free from any delusion.[2] An interesting contrast was thus brought to light: while we are accustomed to discover from the dreams of neurotics jealousies which are alien to their waking lives, in this psychotic case the delusion which dominated the patient in the day-time was corrected by his dream. We may probably take it as being generally true that what occurs in all these cases is a psychical *split*. Two psychical attitudes have been formed instead of a single one—one, the normal one, which takes account of reality, and another which under the influence of the instincts detaches the ego from reality. The two exist alongside of each other. The issue depends on their relative strength. If the second is or becomes the stronger, the necessary precondition for a psychosis is present. If the relation is reversed, then there is an apparent cure of the delusional disorder. Actually it has only retreated into the unconscious, just as numerous observations lead us to believe that the delusion existed ready-made for a long time before its manifest irruption.

The view which postulates that in all psychoses there is a *splitting of the ego* could not call for so much notice if it did not turn out to apply to other states more like the neuroses and, finally, to the neuroses themselves. I first became convinced of this in cases of *fetishism*. This abnormality, which may be counted as one of the perversions, is, as is well known, based on the patient—who is almost always male—not recognizing the fact that females have no penis—a fact which is extremely undesirable to him since it is a proof of the possibility of his being castrated himself. He therefore disavows his own sense-perception which showed him that the female genitals lack a penis and holds fast to the contrary conviction. The disavowed per-

[1] [Freud adds the term 'amentia', used by Meynert in this sense.]

[2] [This case is reported at some length in Freud's paper 'Some Neurotic Mechanisms' (1922*b*), *Standard Ed.*, **18**, 227.]

ception does not, however, remain entirely without influence for, in spite of everything, he has not the courage to assert that he actually saw a penis. He takes hold of something else instead – a part of the body or some other object – and assigns it the role of the penis which he cannot do without. It is usually something that he in fact saw at the moment at which he saw the female genitals, or it is something that can suitably serve as a symbolic substitute for the penis. Now it would be incorrect to describe this process when a fetish is constructed as a splitting of the ego; it is a compromise formed with the help of displacement, such as we have been familiar with in dreams. But our observations show us still more. The creation of the fetish was due to an intention to destroy the evidence for the possibility of castration, so that fear of castration could be avoided. If females, like other living creatures, possess a penis, there is no need to tremble for the continued possession of one's own penis. Now we come across fetishists who have developed the same fear of castration as non-fetishists and react in the same way to it. Their behaviour is therefore simultaneously expressing two contrary premisses. On the one hand they are disavowing the fact of their perception – the fact that they saw no penis in the female genitals; and on the other hand they are recognizing the fact that females have no penis and are drawing the correct conclusions from it. The two attitudes persist side by side throughout their lives without influencing each other. Here is what may rightly be called a splitting of the ego. This circumstance also enables us to understand how it is that fetishism is so often only partially developed. It does not govern the choice of object exclusively but leaves room for a greater or lesser amount of normal sexual behaviour; sometimes, indeed, it retires into playing a modest part or is limited to a mere hint. In fetishists, therefore, the detachment of the ego from the reality of the external world has never succeeded completely.

It must not be thought that fetishism presents an exceptional case as regards a splitting of the ego, it is merely a particularly favourable subject for studying the question. Let us return to our thesis that the childish ego, under the domination of the real world, gets rid of undesirable instinctual demands by what are called repressions. We will now supplement this by further asserting that, during the same period of life, the ego often enough finds itself in the position of fending off some demand

from the external world which it feels distressing and that this is effected by means of a *disavowal* of the perceptions which bring to knowledge this demand from reality. Disavowals of this kind occur very often and not only with fetishists; and whenever we are in a position to study them they turn out to be half-measures, incomplete attempts at detachment from reality. The disavowal is always supplemented by an acknowledgement; two contrary and independent attitudes always arise and result in the situation of there being a splitting of the ego. Once more the issue depends on which of the two can seize hold of the greater intensity.[1]

The facts of this splitting of the ego, which we have just described, are neither so new nor so strange as they may at first appear. It is indeed a universal characteristic of neuroses that there are present in the subject's mental life, as regards some particular behaviour, two different attitudes, contrary to each other and independent of each other. In the case of neuroses, however, one of these attitudes belongs to the ego and the contrary one, which is repressed, belongs to the id. The difference between this case and the other [discussed in the previous paragraph] is essentially a topographical or structural one, and it is not always easy to decide in an individual instance with which of the two possibilities one is dealing. They have, however, the following important characteristic in common. Whatever the ego does in its efforts of defence, whether it seeks to disavow a portion of the real external world or whether it seeks to reject an instinctual demand from the internal world, its success is never complete and unqualified. The outcome always lies in two contrary attitudes, of which the defeated, weaker one, no less than the other, leads to psychical complications. In conclusion, it is only necessary to point out how little of all these processes becomes known to us through our conscious perception.[2]

[1] [I.e., the greater psychical energy. See footnote, p. 168 above.]

[2] [The account of fetishism in this chapter is mainly derived from Freud's paper on the subject written some ten years before (1927*e*), where an early reference to a splitting of the ego will also be found. Cf. the Editor's Note to that paper, *Standard Ed.*, **19**, 150 f. Both these questions had also been approached in an unfinished paper 'Splitting of the Ego in the Process of Defence' (1940*e*) [1938], (see p. 271 below), which Freud had begun a few months before he wrote the present work. A discussion of the position appears in the Editor's Note to that paper, p. 273 f. below.]

Chapter IX

THE INTERNAL WORLD

We have no way of conveying knowledge of a complicated set of simultaneous events except by describing them successively; and thus it happens that all our accounts are at fault to begin with owing to one-sided simplification and must wait till they can be supplemented, built on to, and so set right.

The picture of an ego which mediates between the id and the external world, which takes over the instinctual demands of the former in order to lead them to satisfaction, which derives perceptions from the latter and uses them as memories, which, intent on its self-preservation, puts itself in defence against excessively strong claims from both sides and which, at the same time, is guided in all its decisions by the injunctions of a modified pleasure principle — this picture in fact applies to the ego only up to the end of the first period of childhood, till about the age of five. At about that time an important change has taken place. A portion of the external world has, at least partially, been abandoned as an object and has instead, by identification, been taken into the ego and thus become an integral part of the internal world. This new psychical agency continues to carry on the functions which have hitherto been performed by the people [the abandoned objects] in the external world: it observes the ego, gives it orders, judges it and threatens it with punishments, exactly like the parents whose place it has taken. We call this agency the *super-ego* and are aware of it in its judicial functions as our *conscience*. It is a remarkable thing that the super-ego often displays a severity for which no model has been provided by the real parents, and moreover that it calls the ego to account not only for its deeds but equally for its thoughts and unexecuted intentions, of which the super-ego seems to have knowledge. This reminds us that the hero of the Oedipus legend too felt guilty for his deeds and submitted himself to self-punishment, although the coercive power of the oracle should have acquitted him of guilt in our judgement and his own. The super-ego is in fact the heir to the Oedipus complex and is only established after that complex has been disposed of.

For that reason its excessive severity does not follow a real model but corresponds to the strength of the defence used against the temptation of the Oedipus complex. Some suspicion of this state of things lies, no doubt, at the bottom of the assertion made by philosophers and believers that the moral sense is not instilled into men by education or acquired by them in their social life but is implanted in them from a higher source.

So long as the ego works in full harmony with the super-ego it is not easy to distinguish between their manifestations; but tensions and estrangements between them make themselves very plainly visible. The torments caused by the reproaches of conscience correspond precisely to a child's fear of loss of love, a fear the place of which has been taken by the moral agency. On the other hand, if the ego has successfully resisted a temptation to do something which would be objectionable to the super-ego, it feels raised in its self-esteem and strengthened in its pride, as though it had made some precious acquisition. In this way the super-ego continues to play the part of an external world for the ego, although it has become a portion of the internal world. Throughout later life it represents the influence of a person's childhood, of the care and education given him by his parents and of his dependence on them — a childhood which is prolonged so greatly in human beings by a family life in common. And in all this it is not only the personal qualities of these parents that is making itself felt, but also everything that had a determining effect on them themselves, the tastes and standards of the social class in which they lived and the innate dispositions and traditions of the race from which they sprang. Those who have a liking for generalizations and sharp distinctions may say that the external world, in which the individual finds himself exposed after being detached from his parents, represents the power of the present, that his id, with its inherited trends, represents the organic past, and that the super-ego, which comes to join them later, represents more than anything the cultural past, which a child has, as it were, to repeat as an after-experience during the few years of his early life. It is unlikely that such generalizations can be universally correct. Some portion of the cultural acquisitions have undoubtedly left a precipitate behind them in the id, much of what is contributed by the super-ego will awaken an echo in the id, not a few of the

child's new experiences will be intensified because they are repetitions of some primaeval phylogenetic experience.

'Was du ererbt von deinen Vatern hast,
Erwirb es, um es zu besitzen.'[1]

Thus the super-ego takes up a kind of intermediate position between the id and the external world; it unites in itself the influences of the present and the past. In the establishment of the super-ego we have before us, as it were, an example of the way in which the present is changed into the past. . . .

* * * * *

[1] ['What thou hast inherited from thy fathers, acquire it to make it thine.' Goethe, *Faust*, Part I, Scene 1. Freud had quoted this previously in his *Totem and Taboo* (1912–13), *Standard Ed.*, **13**, 158.]

ANALYSIS TERMINABLE AND INTERMINABLE
(1937)

EDITOR'S NOTE

DIE ENDLICHE UND DIE UNENDLICHE ANALYSE

(*a*) GERMAN EDITIONS:

1937 *Int. Z. Psychoanal.*, **23** (2), 209–40.
1950 *G.W.*, **16**, 59–99.

(*b*) ENGLISH TRANSLATION:

'Analysis Terminable and Interminable'

1937 *Int. J. Psycho-Anal.*, **18** (4), 373–405. (Tr. Joan Riviere.)
1950. *C.P.*, **5**, 316–57. (Revised reprint of above.)

The present translation is a modified version of the one published in 1950. The last eight and a half paragraphs of Section VI of the original German were reprinted in the autumn of 1937 in *Almanach der Psychoanalyse 1938*, 44–50.

This paper was written early in 1937 and published in June. It and the following one, on 'Constructions in Analysis' (1937*d*), were the last strictly psycho-analytic writings by Freud to be brought out in his lifetime. Nearly twenty years had passed since he had published a purely technical work, though questions of technique had, of course, been dealt with in his other writings.

Freud's main earlier discussion of the workings of psycho-analytic therapy was in Lectures XXVII and XXVIII of the *Introductory Lectures* (1916–17). He had returned to the subject very much more briefly in Lecture XXXIV of the *New Introductory Lectures* (1933*a*). Readers of these earlier writings are sometimes struck by what seem to be differences between the present work and its predecessors, and these apparent divergences call for examination.

The paper as a whole gives an impression of pessimism in regard to the therapeutic efficacy of psycho-analysis. Its limitations are constantly stressed, the difficulties of the procedure and the obstacles standing in its way are insisted upon. These, indeed, constitute its principal theme. In fact, however, there

is nothing revolutionary in this. Freud was always well aware of the barriers to success in analysis and was always ready to investigate them. Moreover he was always eager to direct attention to the importance of the non-therapeutic interests of psycho-analysis, the direction in which lay his own personal preferences, particularly in the later part of his life. It will be remembered that in the short discussion of technique in the *New Introductory Lectures* (1933*a*) he wrote that he had 'never been a therapeutic enthusiast'. (*Standard Ed.*, 22, 151.) Thus there is nothing unexpected in the cool attitude shown in this paper towards the therapeutic ambitions of psycho-analysis or in the enumeration of the difficulties confronting it. What may perhaps cause more surprise are some features of Freud's examination of the underlying nature and causes of those difficulties.

It is noticeable, in the first place, that the factors to which he largely draws attention are of a physiological and biological nature. They are thus in the main unsusceptible to psychological influences. Such, for instance, are the relative 'constitutional' strength of the instincts (p. 224 ff.) and the relative weakness of the ego owing to physiological causes such as puberty, the menopause, and physical illness (p. 230). But the most powerful impeding factor of all and one totally beyond any possibility of control—to which some parts of the paper are devoted, p. 242 ff.—is the death instinct. Freud here suggests that this is not only, as he had pointed out in earlier writings, responsible for much of the resistance met with in analysis, but that it is actually the ultimate cause of conflict in the mind (p. 244). In all of this, however, there is once again nothing revolutionary. Freud may be laying more stress than usual on constitutional factors among the difficulties confronting psycho-analysis, but he had always recognized their importance.

Nor are any of the three factors new which Freud selects here as being 'decisive' for the success of our therapeutic efforts (p. 224): the more favourable prognosis for cases of 'traumatic' rather than 'constitutional' origin, the importance of 'quantitative' considerations, and the question of an 'alteration of the ego'. It is on this third point that so much fresh light is thrown in the present paper. In earlier accounts of the therapeutic process an essential place was always allotted to an alteration in the ego which was to be brought about by the analyst as a preliminary to the undoing of the patient's repressions. (See,

for instance, the description in Lecture XXVIII of the *Introductory Lectures*, *Standard Ed.*, **16**, 400. But as to the nature of this alteration and how it could be effected very little was known. The recent advances in Freud's analysis of the ego now made it possible for him to carry the investigation further. The therapeutic alteration of the ego was now seen rather as the undoing of alterations already present as results of the defensive process. And it is worth recalling that the fact of alterations of the ego brought about by defensive processes had been mentioned by Freud at a very early date. The concept is to be found in his discussion of delusions in his second paper on the neuro-psychoses of defence (1896*b*, *Standard Ed.*, **3**, 185), and at several points in his even earlier Draft K (Freud, 1950*a*) of January 1, 1896. Thereafter, the notion seems to have been in abeyance and the connection between anticathexes, reaction-formations and alterations of the ego is stated plainly for the first time in *Inhibitions, Symptoms and Anxiety* (1926*d*, *Standard Ed.*, **20**, 157, 159 and 164). It reappears in the *New Introductory Lectures* (1933*a*, ibid., **22**, 90), and, after the long discussion of it in the present paper, in *Moses and Monotheism* (1939*a*, p. 77 above), and, finally, in the *Outline of Psycho-Analysis* (1940*a*, p. 179 above).

There is one respect, however, in which the views expressed by Freud in this paper do seem to differ from, or even to contradict, his earlier ones—namely in the scepticism expressed by him here in regard to the *prophylactic* power of psycho-analysis. His doubts extend to the prospects of preventing not merely the occurrence of a fresh and different neurosis but even a return of a neurosis that has already been treated. The apparent change is shown if we recall a sentence in Lecture XXVII of the *Introductory Lectures* (1916–17), *Standard Ed.*, **16**, 444–5: 'A person who has become normal and free from the operation of repressed instinctual impulses in his relation to the doctor will remain so in his own life after the doctor has once more withdrawn from it.' And again, in Lecture XXVIII (ibid., 451), where Freud is comparing the effects of hypnotic suggestion and psycho-analysis, 'An analytic treatment demands from both doctor and patient the accomplishment of serious work, which is employed in lifting internal resistances. Through the overcoming of these resistances the patient's mental life is permanently changed, is raised to a higher level of development

and remains protected against fresh possibilities of falling ill.' Similarly, in the closing sentences of Lecture XXXI of the *New Introductory Lectures* (1933*a*), Freud writes that the intention of psycho-analysis is 'to strengthen the ego, to make it more independent of the super-ego, to widen its field of perception and enlarge its organization, so that it can appropriate fresh portions of the id. Where id was, there ego shall be.' (*Standard Ed.*, **22**, 80.) The theory underlying these passages seems to be the same, and it seems to differ in important respects from the theory implied in the present work.[1]

The basis of this increased scepticism of Freud's seems to be a conviction of the impossibility of dealing with a conflict that is not 'current' and of the grave objections to converting a 'latent' conflict into a 'current' one. This position appears to imply a change of view not merely about the therapeutic process but about mental events more generally. Here Freud seems to be regarding the 'currently active conflict' as something isolated, something, as it were, in a watertight compartment. Even if the ego is helped to cope with *this* conflict, its capacity to deal with *another* conflict will be unaffected. The instinctual forces too seem to be thought of as isolated in the same sort of way: the fact that their pressure has been eased in the current conflict throws no light on their subsequent behaviour. By contrast, according to the earlier view the analytic process seems to have been considered as capable of altering the ego in a more *general* sense and one which would persist after the end of the analysis; and the instinctual forces seem to have been regarded as deriving their pressure from an *undifferentiated* reservoir of power. So that in proportion as the analysis had been successful, any fresh inroad by the instinctual forces would have had some of its pressure reduced by the analysis and they would be confronted by an ego which the analysis had made more capable of dealing with them. Thus there would be no absolute segregation of the 'current' conflict from the 'latent' ones; and the prophylactic power of an analysis (like its immediate outcome) would depend on quantitative considerations—on the relative increase brought about by it in the strength of the ego and the relative decrease in that of the instincts.

[1] It must be added that in another of the *New Introductory Lectures* (XXXIV) Freud is emphatic in insisting on the limitations of psychoanalytic therapy (ibid., 153-4).

It may be remarked that the account of the therapeutic effects of analysis written by Freud about a year after the present paper, in his *Outline of Psycho-Analysis* (1940*a* [1938]), though it agrees closely in general with the account given here, seems to revert perhaps to his earlier view on the particular question we have just been considering. For instance, he writes there, after commenting on the great trouble involved in overcoming resistances: 'It is worth while, however, for it brings about an advantageous alteration of the ego which will be maintained independently of the outcome of the transference and will hold good in life.' P. 179 above.) This would appear to suggest an alteration of a *general* kind.

It is of interest to note that at the very beginning of his practice Freud was worried by very much the same problems as these, which may thus be said to have extended over the entire length of his analytic studies. Here is an extract from a letter written by him to Wilhelm Fliess on April 16, 1900 (Freud, 1950*a*, Letter 133) on the subject of Herr E., who had been under treatment certainly since 1897 and probably at least since 1895, and to the ups and downs of whose case there are repeated references in the correspondence. 'E.'s career as a patient has at last come to an end with an invitation to spend an evening here. His riddle is *almost* completely solved, his condition is excellent, his whole being is altered, at the moment a residue of his symptoms remains. I am beginning to understand that the apparently interminable nature of the treatment is something determined by law and is dependent on the transference. I hope that this residue will not prejudice the practical success. It lay only with me to decide whether the treatment should be further prolonged; but it dawned on me that such a prolongation is a compromise between being ill and being well which patients themselves desire and to which for that reason the physician should not consent. The asymptotic termination of the treatment is substantially a matter of indifference to me; it is for outsiders rather that it is a disappointment. In any case I shall keep an eye on the man. . . .'

ANALYSIS TERMINABLE AND INTERMINABLE

I

EXPERIENCE has taught us that psycho-analytic therapy—the freeing of someone from his neurotic symptoms, inhibitions and abnormalities of character—is a time-consuming business. Hence, from the very first, attempts have been made to shorten the duration of analyses. Such endeavours required no justification; they could claim to be based on the strongest considerations of reason and expediency. But there was probably still at work in them as well some trace of the impatient contempt with which the medical science of an earlier day regarded the neuroses as being uncalled-for consequences of invisible injuries. If it had now become necessary to attend to them, they should at least be disposed of as quickly as possible.

A particularly energetic attempt in this direction was made by Otto Rank, following upon his book, *The Trauma of Birth* (1924). He supposed that the true source of neurosis was the act of birth, since this involves the possibility of a child's 'primal fixation' to his mother not being surmounted but persisting as a 'primal repression'. Rank hoped that if this primal trauma were dealt with by a subsequent analysis the whole neurosis would be got rid of. Thus this one small piece of analytic work would save the necessity for all the rest. And a few months should be enough to accomplish this. It cannot be disputed that Rank's argument was bold and ingenious, but it did not stand the test of critical examination. Moreover, it was a child of its time, conceived under the stress of the contrast between the post-war misery of Europe and the 'prosperity' [1] of America, and designed to adapt the tempo of analytic therapy to the haste of American life. We have not heard much about what the implementation of Rank's plan has done for cases of sickness. Probably not more than if the fire-brigade, called to deal with a house that had been set on fire by an overturned oil-lamp, contented themselves with removing the lamp from the room

[1] [In English in the original.]

in which the blaze had started. No doubt a considerable shortening of the brigade's activities would be effected by this means. The theory and practice of Rank's experiment are now things of the past—no less than American 'prosperity' itself.[1]

I myself had adopted another way of speeding up an analytic treatment even before the war. At that time I had taken on the case of a young Russian, a man spoilt by wealth, who had come to Vienna in a state of complete helplessness, accompanied by a private doctor and an attendant.[2] In the course of a few years it was possible to give him back a large amount of his independence, to awaken his interest in life and to adjust his relations to the people most important to him. But there progress came to a stop. We advanced no further in clearing up the neurosis of his childhood, on which his later illness was based, and it was obvious that the patient found his present position highly comfortable and had no wish to take any step forward which would bring him nearer to the end of his treatment. It was a case of the treatment inhibiting itself: it was in danger of failing as a result of its partial success. In this predicament I resorted to the heroic measure of fixing a time-limit for the analysis.[3] At the beginning of a year's work I informed the patient that the coming year was to be the last one of his treatment, no matter what he achieved in the time still left to him. At first he did not believe me, but once he was convinced that I was in deadly earnest, the desired change set in. His resistances shrank up, and in these last months of his treatment he was able to reproduce all the memories and to discover all the connections which seemed necessary for understanding his early neurosis and mastering his present one. When he left me in the midsummer of 1914, with as little suspicion as the rest of us of what lay so shortly ahead, I believed that his cure was radical and permanent.

In a footnote added to this patient's case history in 1923,[4]

[1] [This was written soon after the great financial crisis in the United States. A considered criticism of Rank's theory had been given by Freud in *Inhibitions, Symptoms and Anxiety* (1926*d*). See, in particular, *Standard Ed.*, **20**, 135–6 and 150–3.]

[2] See my paper, published with the patient's consent, 'From the History of an Infantile Neurosis' (1918*b*). It contains no detailed account of the young man's adult illness, which is touched on only when its connection with his infantile neurosis absolutely requires it.

[3] [See *Standard Ed.*, **17**, 10–11.] [4] [Ibid., 121.]

I have already reported that I was mistaken. When, towards the end of the war, he returned to Vienna, a refugee and destitute, I had to help him to master a part of the transference which had not been resolved. This was accomplished in a few months, and I was able to end my footnote with the statement that 'since then the patient has felt normal and has behaved unexceptionably, in spite of the war having robbed him of his home, his possessions, and all his family relationships'. Fifteen years have passed since then without disproving the truth of this verdict; but certain reservations have become necessary. The patient has stayed on in Vienna and has kept a place in society, if a humble one. But several times during this period his good state of health has been interrupted by attacks of illness which could only be construed as off-shoots of his perennial neurosis. Thanks to the skill of one of my pupils, Dr. Ruth Mack Brunswick, a short course of treatment has on each occasion brought these conditions to an end. I hope that Dr. Mack Brunswick herself will shortly report on the circumstances.[1] Some of these attacks were still concerned with residual portions of the transference; and, where this was so, short-lived though they were, they showed a distinctly paranoid character. In other attacks, however, the pathogenic material consisted of pieces of the patient's childhood history, which had not come to light while I was analysing him and which now came away — the comparison is unavoidable — like sutures after an operation, or small fragments of necrotic bone. I have found the history of this patient's recovery scarcely less interesting than that of his illness.

I have subsequently employed this fixing of a time-limit in other cases as well, and I have also taken the experiences of other analysts into account. There can be only one verdict about the value of this blackmailing device: it is effective provided that one hits the right time for it. But it cannot guarantee to accomplish the task completely. On the contrary, we may be sure that, while part of the material will become accessible under the pressure of the threat, another part will be kept back and thus become buried, as it were, and lost to our therapeutic efforts. For once the analyst has fixed the time-limit he cannot

[1] [Her report had in fact already appeared several years earlier (Brunswick, 1928). For further information on the later history of the case see an editorial footnote, *Standard Ed.*, **17**, 122.]

extend it; otherwise the patient would lose all faith in him. The most obvious way out would be for the patient to continue his treatment with another analyst, although we know that such a change will involve a fresh loss of time and abandoning fruits of work already done. Nor can any general rule be laid down as to the right time for resorting to this forcible technical device; the decision must be left to the analyst's tact. A miscalculation cannot be rectified. The saying that a lion only springs once must apply here.

II

The discussion of the technical problem of how to accelerate the slow progress of an analysis leads us to another, more deeply interesting question: is there such a thing as a natural end to an analysis—is there any possibility at all of bringing an analysis to such an end? To judge by the common talk of analysts it would seem to be so, for we often hear them say, when they are deploring or excusing the recognized imperfections of some fellow-mortal: 'His analysis was not finished' or 'he was never analysed to the end.'

We must first of all decide what is meant by the ambiguous phrase 'the end of an analysis'. From a practical standpoint it is easy to answer. An analysis is ended when the analyst and the patient cease to meet each other for the analytic session. This happens when two conditions have been approximately fulfilled. first, that the patient shall no longer be suffering from his symptoms and shall have overcome his anxieties and his inhibitions; and secondly, that the analyst shall judge that so much repressed material has been made conscious, so much that was unintelligible has been explained, and so much internal resistance conquered, that there is no need to fear a repetition of the pathological processes concerned. If one is prevented by external difficulties from reaching this goal, it is better to speak of an *incomplete* analysis rather than of an *unfinished* one.

The other meaning of the 'end' of an analysis is much more ambitious. In this sense of it, what we are asking is whether the analyst has had such a far-reaching influence on the patient that no further change could be expected to take place in him if his analysis were continued. It is as though it were possible by means of analysis to attain to a level of absolute psychical

normality—a level, moreover, which we could feel confident would be able to remain stable, as though, perhaps, we had succeeded in resolving every one of the patient's repressions and in filling in all the gaps in his memory. We may first consult our experience to enquire whether such things do in fact happen, and then turn to our theory to discover whether there is any *possibility* of their happening.

Every analyst will have treated a few cases which have had this gratifying outcome. He has succeeded in clearing up the patient's neurotic disturbance, and it has not returned and has not been replaced by any other such disturbance. Nor are we without some insight into the determinants of these successes. The patient's ego had not been noticeably altered[1] and the aetiology of his disturbance had been essentially traumatic. The aetiology of every neurotic disturbance is, after all, a mixed one. It is a question either of the instincts being excessively strong—that is to say, recalcitrant to taming[2] by the ego—or of the effects of early (i.e. premature) traumas which the immature ego was unable to master. As a rule there is a combination of both factors, the constitutional and the accidental. The stronger the constitutional factor, the more readily will a trauma lead to a fixation and leave behind a developmental disturbance; the stronger the trauma, the more certainly will its injurious effects become manifest even when the instinctual situation is normal. There is no doubt that an aetiology of the traumatic sort offers by far the more favourable field for analysis. Only when a case is a predominantly traumatic one will analysis succeed in doing what it is so superlatively able to do; only then will it, thanks to having strengthened the patient's ego, succeed in replacing by a correct solution the inadequate decision made in his early life. Only in such cases can one speak of an analysis having been definitively ended. In them, analysis has done all that it should and does not need to be continued. It is true that, if the patient who has been restored in this way never produces another disorder calling for analysis, we do not know how much his immunity may not be due to a kind fate which has spared him ordeals that are too severe.

A constitutional strength of instinct and an unfavourable

[1] [The idea of an 'alteration of the ego' is discussed at length below, particularly in Section V. See also the Editor's Note, p. 212 f. above.]

[2] [This word is considered below, on p. 229.]

alteration of the ego acquired in its defensive struggle in the sense of its being dislocated and restricted—these are the factors which are prejudicial to the effectiveness of analysis and which may make its duration interminable. One is tempted to make the first factor—strength of instinct—responsible as well for the emergence of the second—the alteration of the ego, but it seems that the latter too has an aetiology of its own. And, indeed, it must be admitted that our knowledge of these matters is as yet insufficient. They are only now becoming the subject of analytic study. In this field the interest of analysts seems to me to be quite wrongly directed. Instead of an enquiry into how a cure by analysis comes about (a matter which I think has been sufficiently elucidated) the question should be asked of what are the obstacles that stand in the way of such a cure.

This brings me to two problems which arise directly out of analytic practice, as I hope to show by the following examples. A certain man, who had himself practised analysis with great success, came to the conclusion that his relations both to men and women—to the men who were his competitors and to the woman whom he loved—were nevertheless not free from neurotic impediments, and he therefore made himself the subject of an analysis by someone else whom he regarded as superior to himself.[1] This critical illumination of his own self had a completely successful result. He married the woman he loved and turned into a friend and teacher of his supposed rivals. Many years passed in this way, during which his relations with his former analyst also remained unclouded. But then, for no assignable external reason, trouble arose. The man who had been analysed became antagonistic to the analyst and reproached him for having failed to give him a complete analysis. The analyst, he said, ought to have known and to have taken into account the fact that a transference-relation can never be purely positive, he should have given his attention to the possibilities of a negative transference. The analyst defended himself by saying that, at the time of the analysis, there was no sign of a negative transference. But even if he had failed to observe

[1] [According to Ernest Jones this relates to Ferenczi, who was analysed by Freud for three weeks in October, 1914, and for another three weeks—with two sessions daily—in June, 1916. See Jones, 1957, 158, and 1957, 195 and 213. Cf. also Freud's obituary of Ferenczi (1933*a*), *Standard Ed.*, **22**, 228.]

some very faint signs of it – which was not altogether ruled out, considering the limited horizon of analysis in these early days – it was still doubtful, he thought, whether he would have had the power to activate a topic or, as we say, a 'complex', by merely pointing it out, so long as it was not currently active in the patient himself at the time. To activate it would certainly have required some unfriendly piece of behaviour in reality on the analyst's part. Furthermore, he added, not every good relation between an analyst and his subject during and after analysis was to be regarded as a transference, there were also friendly relations which were based on reality and which proved to be viable.

I now pass on to my second example, which raises the same problem. An unmarried woman, no longer young, had been cut off from life since puberty by an inability to walk, owing to severe pains in the legs. Her condition was obviously of a hysterical nature, and it had defied many kinds of treatment. An analysis lasting three-quarters of a year removed the trouble and restored to the patient, an excellent and worthy person, her right to a share in life. In the years following her recovery she was consistently unfortunate. There were disasters in her family, and financial losses, and, as she grew older, she saw every hope of happiness in love and marriage vanish. But the one-time invalid stood up to all this valiantly and was a support to her family in difficult times. I cannot remember whether it was twelve or fourteen years after the end of her analysis that, owing to profuse haemorrhages, she was obliged to undergo a gynaecological examination. A myoma was found, which made a complete hysterectomy advisable. From the time of this operation, the woman became ill once more. She fell in love with her surgeon, wallowed in masochistic phantasies about the fearful changes in her inside – phantasies with which she concealed her romance – and proved inaccessible to a further attempt at analysis. She remained abnormal to the end of her life. The successful analytic treatment took place so long ago that we cannot expect too much from it; it was in the earliest years of my work as an analyst. No doubt the patient's second illness may have sprung from the same source as her first one which had been successfully overcome, it may have been a different manifestation of the same repressed impulses, which the analysis had only incompletely resolved. But I am inclined to think that,

were it not for the new trauma, there would have been no fresh outbreak of neurosis.

These two examples, which have been purposely selected from a large number of similar ones, will suffice to start a discussion of the topics we are considering. The sceptical, the optimistic and the ambitious will take quite different views of them. The first will say that it is now proved that even a successful analytic treatment does not protect the patient, who at the time has been cured, from falling ill later on of another neurosis—or, indeed, of a neurosis derived from the same instinctual root—that is to say, from a recurrence of his old trouble. The others will consider that this is not proved. They will object that the two examples date from the early days of analysis, twenty and thirty years ago, respectively, and that since then we have acquired deeper insight and wider knowledge, and that our technique has changed in accordance with our new discoveries. To-day, they will say, we may demand and expect that an analytic cure shall prove permanent, or at least that if a patient falls ill again, his new illness shall not turn out to be a revival of his earlier instinctual disturbance, manifesting itself in new forms. Our experience, they will maintain, does not oblige us to restrict so materially the demands that can be made upon our therapeutic method.

My reason for choosing these two examples is, of course, precisely because they lie so far back in the past. It is obvious that the more recent the successful outcome of an analysis is, the less utilizable it is for our discussion, since we have no means of predicting what the later history of the recovery will be. The optimists' expectations clearly presuppose a number of things which are not precisely self-evident. They assume, firstly, that there really is a possibility of disposing of an instinctual conflict—or, more correctly, a conflict between the ego and an instinct—definitively and for all time; secondly, that while we are treating someone for one instinctual conflict we can, as it were, inoculate him against the possibility of any other such conflicts; and thirdly, that we have the power, for purposes of prophylaxis, to stir up a pathogenic conflict of this sort which is not betraying itself at the time by any indications, and that it is wise to do so. I throw out these questions without proposing to answer them now. Perhaps it may not be possible at present to give any certain answer to them at all.

Some light may probably be thrown on them by theoretical considerations. But another point has already become clear: if we wish to fulfil the more exacting demands upon analytic therapy, our road will not lead us to, or by way of, a shortening of its duration.

III

An analytic experience which now extends over several decades, and a change which has taken place in the nature and mode of my activity, encourage me to attempt to answer the questions before us. In earlier days I treated quite a large number of patients, who, as was natural, wanted to be dealt with as quickly as possible. Of late years I have been mainly engaged in training analyses; a relatively small number of severe cases of illness remained with me for continuous treatment, interrupted, however, by longer or shorter intervals. With them, the therapeutic aim was no longer the same. There was no question of shortening the treatment; the purpose was radically to exhaust the possibilities of illness in them and to bring about a deep-going alteration of their personality.

Of the three factors which we have recognized as being decisive for the success or otherwise of analytic treatment – the influence of traumas, the constitutional strength of the instincts and alterations of the ego – what concerns us here is only the second, the strength of the instincts. A moment's reflection raises a doubt whether the restrictive use of the adjective 'constitutional' (or 'congenital') is essential. However true it may be that the constitutional factor is of decisive importance from the very beginning, it is nevertheless conceivable that a reinforcement of instinct coming later in life might produce the same effects. If so, we should have to modify our formula and say 'the strength of the instincts *at the time*' instead of 'the *constitutional* strength of the instincts'. The first of our questions [p. 223] was: 'Is it possible by means of analytic therapy to dispose of a conflict between an instinct and the ego, or of a pathogenic instinctual demand upon the ego, permanently and definitively?' To avoid misunderstanding it is not unnecessary, perhaps, to explain more exactly what is meant by 'permanently disposing of an instinctual demand'. Certainly not 'causing the

demand to disappear so that nothing more is ever heard from it again'. This is in general impossible, nor is it at all to be desired. No, we mean something else, something which may be roughly described as a 'taming' [1] of the instinct. That is to say, the instinct is brought completely into the harmony of the ego, becomes accessible to all the influences of the other trends in the ego and no longer seeks to go its independent way to satisfaction. If we are asked by what methods and means this result is achieved, it is not easy to find an answer. We can only say: 'So muss denn doch die Hexe dran!' [2]—the Witch Metapsychology. Without metapsychological speculation and theorizing—I had almost said 'phantasying'—we shall not get another step forward. Unfortunately, here as elsewhere, what our Witch reveals is neither very clear nor very detailed. We have only a single clue to start from—though it is a clue of the highest value—namely, the antithesis between the primary and the secondary processes; and to that antithesis I shall at this point turn.

If now we take up our first question once more, we find that our new line of approach inevitably leads us to a particular conclusion. The question was whether it is possible to dispose of an instinctual conflict permanently and definitively—i.e. to 'tame' an instinctual demand in that fashion. Formulated in these terms, the question makes no mention at all of the strength of the instinct; but it is precisely on this that the outcome depends. Let us start from the assumption that what analysis achieves for neurotics is nothing other than what normal people bring about for themselves without its help. Everyday experience, however, teaches us that in a normal person any solution of an instinctual conflict only holds good for a particular strength of instinct, or, more correctly, only for a particular relation between the strength of the instinct and the strength

[1] ['*Bändigung*.' Freud had, among other places, used the word in 'The Economic Problem of Masochism' (1924*c*) to describe the action by which the libido can make the death instinct innocuous. *Standard Ed.*, **19**, 164. Much earlier, in Section 3 of Part III of the 'Project' of 1895, he had used it of the process by which painful memories cease to carry affect, owing to the intervention of the ego. (Freud, 1950*a*.)]

[2] ['We must call the Witch to our help after all!'
Goethe, *Faust*, Part I, Scene 6.
Faust, in search of the secret of youth, unwillingly seeks for the Witch's help.]

of the ego.[1] If the strength of the ego diminishes, whether through illness or exhaustion, or from some similar cause, all the instincts which have so far been successfully tamed may renew their demands and strive to obtain substitutive satisfactions in abnormal ways.[2] Irrefutable proof of this statement is supplied by our nightly dreams; they react to the sleeping attitude assumed by the ego with an awakening of instinctual demands.

The material on the other side [the strength of the instincts] is equally unambiguous. Twice in the course of individual development certain instincts are considerably reinforced, at puberty, and, in women, at the menopause. We are not in the least surprised if a person who was not neurotic before becomes so at these times. When his instincts were not so strong, he succeeded in taming them; but when they are reinforced he can no longer do so. The repressions behave like dams against the pressure of water. The same effects which are produced by these two physiological reinforcements of instinct, may be brought about in an irregular fashion by accidental causes at any other period of life. Such reinforcements may be set up by fresh traumas, enforced frustrations, or the collateral influence of instincts upon one another. The result is always the same, and it underlines the irresistible power of the quantitative factor in the causation of illness.

I feel as though I ought to be ashamed of so much ponderous exposition, seeing that everything I have said has long been familiar and self-evident. It is a fact that we have always behaved as if we knew all this; but, for the most part, our theoretical concepts have neglected to attach the same importance to the *economic* line of approach as they have to the

[1] Or, to be perfectly accurate, where that relation falls within certain limits.

[2] Here we have a justification of the claim to aetiological importance of such non-specific factors as overwork, shock, etc. These factors have always been assured of general recognition, but have had to be pushed into the background precisely by psycho-analysis. It is impossible to define health except in metapsychological terms: i.e. by reference to the dynamic relations between the agencies of the mental apparatus which have been recognized (or all of that is preferred) inferred or conjectured by us. [Early depreciation by Freud of the aetiological importance in neurosis of such factors as 'overwork' will be found as early as in Draft A in the Fliess papers, dating perhaps from 1892 (1950*a*, *Standard Ed.*, **1**).]

dynamic and *topographical* ones. My excuse is therefore that I am drawing attention to this neglect.[1]

Before we decide on an answer to this question, however, we must consider an objection whose force lies in the fact that we are probably predisposed in its favour. Our arguments, it will be said, are all deduced from the processes which take place spontaneously between the ego and the instincts, and they presuppose that analytic therapy can accomplish nothing which does not, under favourable and normal conditions, occur of itself. But is this really so? Is it not precisely the claim of our theory that analysis produces a state which never does arise spontaneously in the ego and that this newly created state constitutes the essential difference between a person who has been analysed and a person who has not? Let us bear in mind what this claim is based on. All repressions take place in early childhood, they are primitive defensive measures taken by the immature, feeble ego. In later years no fresh repressions are carried out, but the old ones persist, and their services continue to be made use of by the ego for mastering the instincts. New conflicts are disposed of by what we call 'after-repression'.[2] We may apply to these infantile repressions our general statement that repressions depend absolutely and entirely on the relative strength of the forces involved and that they cannot hold out against an increase in the strength of the instincts. Analysis, however, enables the ego, which has attained greater maturity and strength, to undertake a revision of these old repressions; a few are demolished, while others are recognized but constructed afresh out of more solid material. These new dams are of quite a different degree of firmness from the earlier ones; we may be confident that they will not give way so easily before a rising flood of instinctual strength. Thus the real achievement of analytic therapy would be the subsequent correction of the original process of repression, a correction which puts an end to the dominance of the quantitative factor.

Thus far our theory, which we cannot give up except under

[1] [This same line of argument had been traced particularly clearly, in less technical language, in Chapter VII of *The Question of Lay Analysis* (1926e), *Standard Ed.*, **20**, 241–3.]

[2] ['*Nachdrangung*.' See the metapsychological paper on 'Repression' (1915d, *Standard Ed.*, **14**, 148, where, however, as elsewhere at that period) the term used is '*Nachdrangen*', translated 'after-pressure'.]

irresistible compulsion. And what does our *experience* have to say to this? Perhaps our experience is not yet wide enough for us to come to a settled conclusion. It confirms our expectations often enough, but not always. One has an impression that one ought not to be surprised if it should turn out in the end that the difference between a person who has not been analysed and the behaviour of a person after he has been analysed is not so thorough-going as we aim at making it and as we expect and maintain it to be. If this is so, it would mean that analysis *sometimes* succeeds in eliminating the influence of an increase in instinct, but not invariably, or that the effect of analysis is limited to increasing the power of resistance of the inhibitions, so that they are equal to much greater demands than before the analysis or if no analysis had taken place. I really cannot commit myself to a decision on this point, nor do I know whether a decision is possible at the present time.

There is, however, another angle from which we can approach this problem of the variability in the effect of analysis. We know that the first step towards attaining intellectual mastery of our environment is to discover generalizations, rules and laws which bring order into chaos. In doing this we simplify the world of phenomena; but we cannot avoid falsifying it, especially if we are dealing with processes of development and change. What we are concerned with is discerning a *qualitative* alteration, and as a rule in doing so we neglect, at any rate to begin with, a *quantitative* factor. In the real world, transitions and intermediate stages are far more common than sharply differentiated opposite states. In studying developments and changes we direct our attention solely to the outcome; we readily overlook the fact that such processes are usually more or less incomplete—that is to say, that they are in fact only partial alterations. A shrewd satirist of old Austria, Johann Nestroy,[1] once said: 'Every step forward is only half as big as it looks at first.' It is tempting to attribute a quite general validity to this malicious dictum. There are nearly always residual phenomena, a partial hanging-back. When an open-handed Maecenas surprises us by some isolated trait of miserliness, or when a person who is constantly over-kind suddenly indulges in a hostile action, such 'residual phenomena' are

[1] [Freud had quoted the same remark in *The Question of Lay Analysis* (1926*e*), *Standard Ed.*, **20**, 193.]

invaluable for genetic research. They show us that these praiseworthy and precious qualities are based on compensation and overcompensation which, as was to have been expected, have not been absolutely and fully successful. Our first account of the development of the libido was that an original oral phase gave way to a sadistic-anal phase and that this was in turn succeeded by a phallic-genital one. Later research has not contradicted this view, but it has corrected it by adding that these replacements do not take place all of a sudden but gradually, so that portions of the earlier organization always persist alongside of the more recent one, and even in normal development the transformation is never complete and residues of earlier libidinal fixations may still be retained in the final configuration. The same thing is to be seen in quite other fields. Of all the erroneous and superstitious beliefs of mankind that have supposedly been surmounted there is not one whose residues do not live on among us to-day in the lower strata of civilized peoples or even in the highest strata of cultural society. What has once come to life clings tenaciously to its existence. One feels inclined to doubt sometimes whether the dragons of primaeval days are really extinct.

Applying these remarks to our present problem, I think that the answer to the question of how to explain the variable results of our analytic therapy might well be that we, too, in endeavouring to replace repressions that are insecure by reliable ego-syntonic controls, do not always achieve our aim to its full extent — that is, do not achieve it thoroughly enough. The transformation is achieved, but often only partially: portions of the old mechanisms remain untouched by the work of analysis. It is difficult to prove that this is really so, for we have no other way of judging what happens but by the outcome which we are trying to explain. Nevertheless, the impressions one receives during the work of analysis do not contradict this assumption, indeed, they seem rather to confirm it. But we must not take the clarity of our own insight as a measure of the conviction which we produce in the patient. His conviction may lack 'depth', as one might say, it is always a question of the quantitative factor, which is so easily overlooked. If this is the correct answer to our question, we may say that analysis, in claiming to cure neuroses by ensuring control over instinct, is always right in theory but not always right in practice. And this is

because it does not always succeed in ensuring to a sufficient degree the foundations on which a control of instinct is based. The cause of such a partial failure is easily discovered. In the past, the quantitative factor of instinctual strength opposed the ego's defensive efforts; for that reason we called in the work of analysis to help; and now that same factor sets a limit to the efficacy of this new effort. If the strength of the instinct is excessive, the mature ego, supported by analysis, fails in its task, just as the helpless ego failed formerly. Its control over instinct is improved, but it remains imperfect because the transformation in the defensive mechanism is only incomplete. There is nothing surprising in this, since the power of the instruments with which analysis operates is not unlimited but restricted, and the final upshot always depends on the relative strength of the psychical agencies which are struggling with one another.

No doubt it is desirable to shorten the duration of analytic treatment, but we can only achieve our therapeutic purpose by increasing the power of analysis to come to the assistance of the ego. Hypnotic influence seemed to be an excellent instrument for our purposes; but the reasons for our having to abandon it are well known. No substitute for hypnosis has yet been found. From this point of view we can understand how such a master of analysis as Ferenczi came to devote the last years of his life to therapeutic experiments, which, unhappily, proved to be vain.

IV

The two further questions whether, while we are treating one instinctual conflict, we can protect a patient from future conflicts, and whether it is feasible and expedient, for prophylactic purposes, to stir up a conflict which is not at the time manifest—must be treated together; for obviously the first task can only be carried out in so far as the second one is—that is, in so far as a possible future conflict is turned into an actual present one upon which influence is then brought to bear. This new way of stating the problem is at bottom only an extension of the earlier one. Whereas in the first instance we were considering how to guard against a return of the same conflict, we are now considering how to guard against its possible replacement by *another* conflict. This sounds a very ambitious

proposal, but all we are trying to do is to make clear what limits are set to the efficacy of analytic therapy.

However much our therapeutic ambition may be tempted to undertake such tasks, experience flatly rejects the notion. If an instinctual conflict is not a currently active one, is not manifesting itself, we cannot influence it even by analysis. The warning that we should let sleeping dogs lie, which we have so often heard in connection with our efforts to explore the psychical underworld, is peculiarly apposite when applied to the conditions of mental life. For if the instincts are causing disturbances, it is a proof that the dogs are not sleeping; and if they seem really to be sleeping, it is not in our power to awaken them. This last statement, however, does not seem to be quite accurate and calls for a more detailed discussion. Let us consider what means we have at our disposal for turning an instinctual conflict which is at the moment latent into one which is currently active. Obviously there are only two things that we can do. We can bring about situations in which the conflict does become currently active, or we can content ourselves with discussing it in the analysis and pointing out the possibility of its arising. The first of these two alternatives can be carried out in two ways: in reality, or in the transference; in either case by exposing the patient to a certain amount of real suffering through frustration and the damming up of libido. Now it is true that we already make use of a technique of this kind in our ordinary analytic procedure. What would otherwise be the meaning of the rule that analysis must be carried out 'in a state of frustration'?[1] But this is a technique which we use in treating a conflict which is already currently active. We seek to bring this conflict to a head, to develop it to its highest pitch, in order to increase the instinctual force available for its solution. Analytic experience has taught us that the better is always the enemy of the good[2] and that in every phase of the patient's recovery we have to fight against his inertia, which is ready to be content with an incomplete solution.

If, however, what we are aiming at is a prophylactic treatment of instinctual conflicts that are not currently active but merely potential, it will not be enough to regulate sufferings

[1] [See the paper on 'Transference Love' (1915a), *Standard Ed.*, **12**, 165 and the Budapest Congress paper (1918*a*), ibid., **17**, 162 ff.]

[2] [The French proverb *'le mieux est l'ennemi du bien'*.]

which are already present in the patient and which he cannot avoid. We should have to make up our minds to provoke fresh sufferings in him; and this we have hitherto quite rightly left to fate. We should receive admonitions from all sides against the presumption of vying with fate in subjecting poor human creatures to such cruel experiments. And what sort of experiments would they be? Could we, for purposes of prophylaxis, take the responsibility of destroying a satisfactory marriage, or causing a patient to give up a post upon which his livelihood depends? Fortunately, we never find ourselves in the position of having to consider whether such interventions in the patient's real life are justified, we do not possess the plenary powers which they would necessitate, and the subject of our therapeutic experiment would certainly refuse to co-operate in it. In practice, then, such a procedure is virtually excluded; but there are, besides, theoretical objections to it. For the work of analysis proceeds best if the patient's pathogenic experiences belong to the past, so that his ego can stand at a distance from them. In states of acute crisis analysis is to all intents and purposes unusable. The ego's whole interest is taken up by the painful reality and it withholds itself from analysis, which is attempting to go below the surface and uncover the influences of the past. To create a fresh conflict would thus only be to make the work of analysis longer and more difficult.

It will be objected that these remarks are quite unnecessary. Nobody thinks of purposely conjuring up new situations of suffering in order to make it possible for a latent instinctual conflict to be treated. This would not be much to boast of as a prophylactic achievement. We know, for instance, that a patient who has recovered from scarlet fever is immune to a return of the same illness, yet it never occurs to a doctor to take a healthy person who may possibly fall ill of scarlet fever and infect him with scarlet fever in order to make him immune to it. The protective measure must not produce the same situation of danger as is produced by the illness itself, but only something very much slighter, as is the case with vaccination against smallpox and many other similar procedures. In analytic prophylaxis against instinctual conflicts, therefore, the only methods which come into consideration are the other two which we have mentioned: the artificial production of new conflicts in the transference (conflicts which, after all, lack the character of reality),

and the arousing of such conflicts in the patient's imagination by talking to him about them and making him familiar with their possibility.

I do not know whether we can assert that the first of these two milder procedures is altogether ruled out in analysis. No experiments have been particularly made in this direction. But difficulties at once suggest themselves, which do not throw a very promising light on such an undertaking. In the first place, the choice of such situations for the transference is very limited. The patients cannot themselves bring all their conflicts into the transference, nor is the analyst able to call out all their possible instinctual conflicts from the transference situation. He may make them jealous or cause them to experience disappointments in love; but no technical purpose is required to bring this about. Such things happen of themselves in any case in most analyses. In the second place, we must not overlook the fact that all measures of this sort would oblige the analyst to behave in an unfriendly way to the patient, and this would have a damaging effect upon the affectionate attitude upon the positive transference—which is the strongest motive for the patient's taking a share in the joint work of analysis. Thus we should on no account expect very much from this procedure.

This therefore leaves only the one method open to us the one which was in all probability the only one originally contemplated. We tell the patient about the possibilities of other instinctual conflicts, and we arouse his expectation that such conflicts may occur in him. What we hope is that this information and this warning will have the effect of activating in him one of the conflicts we have indicated, in a modest degree and yet sufficiently for treatment. But this time experience speaks with no uncertain voice. The expected result does not come about. The patient hears our message, but there is no response. He may think to himself, 'This is very interesting, but I feel no trace of it.' We have increased his knowledge, but altered nothing else in him. The situation is much the same as when people read psycho-analytic writings. The reader is 'stimulated' only by those passages which he feels apply to himself that is, which concern conflicts that are active in him at the time. Everything else leaves him cold. We can have analogous experiences, I think, when we give children sexual enlightenment. I am far from maintaining that this is a harmful or unnecessary

thing to do, but it is clear that the prophylactic effect of this liberal measure has been greatly over-estimated. After such enlightenment, children know something they did not know before, but they make no use of the new knowledge that has been presented to them. We come to see that they are not even in so great a hurry to sacrifice for this new knowledge the sexual theories which might be described as a natural growth and which they have constructed in harmony with, and dependence on, their imperfect libidinal organization—theories about the part played by the stork, about the nature of sexual intercourse and about the way in which babies are made. For a long time after they have been given sexual enlightenment they behave like primitive races who have had Christianity thrust upon them and who continue to worship their old idols in secret.[1]

V

We started from the question of how we can shorten the inconveniently long duration of analytic treatment, and, still with this question of time in mind, we went on to consider whether it is possible to achieve a permanent cure or even to prevent future illness by prophylactic treatment. In doing so, we found that the factors which were decisive for the success of our therapeutic efforts were the influence of traumatic aetiology, the relative strength of the instincts which have to be controlled, and something which we have called an alteration of the ego [See p. 224 above.] Only the second of these factors has been discussed by us in any detail, and in connection with it we have had occasion to recognize the paramount importance of the quantitative factor and to stress the claim of the metapsychological line of approach to be taken into account in any attempt at explanation.

Concerning the third factor, the alteration of the ego, we have as yet said nothing. When we turn our attention to it, the first impression we receive is that there is much to ask and much to answer here, and that what we have to say about it will prove to be very inadequate. This first impression is confirmed when

[1] [These reflections of Freud's on the sexual enlightenment of children may be compared with the less sophisticated ones in his early paper on the subject (1907*c*).]

we go further into the problem. As is well known, the analytic situation consists in our allying ourselves with the ego of the person under treatment, in order to subdue portions of his id which are uncontrolled – that is to say to include them in the synthesis of his ego. The fact that a co-operation of this kind habitually fails in the case of psychotics affords us a first solid footing for our judgement. The ego, if we are to be able to make such a pact with it, must be a normal one. But a normal ego of this sort is, like normality in general, an ideal fiction. The abnormal ego, which is unserviceable for our purposes, is unfortunately no fiction. Every normal person, in fact, is only normal on the average. His ego approximates to that of the psychotic in some part or other and to a greater or lesser extent; and the degree of its remoteness from one end of the series and of its proximity to the other will furnish us with a provisional measure of what we have so indefinitely termed an 'alteration of the ego'.

If we ask what is the source of the great variety of kinds and degrees of alteration of the ego, we cannot escape the first obvious alternative, that such alterations are either congenital or acquired. Of these, the second sort will be the easier to treat. If they are acquired, it will certainly have been in the course of development, starting from the first years of life. For the ego has to try from the very outset to fulfil its task of mediating between its id and the external world in the service of the pleasure principle, and to protect the id from the dangers of the external world. If, in the course of these efforts, the ego learns to adopt a defensive attitude towards its own id as well and to treat the latter's instinctual demands as external dangers, this happens, at any rate in part, because it understands that a satisfaction of instinct would lead to conflicts with the external world. Thereafter, under the influence of education, the ego grows accustomed to removing the scene of the fight from outside to within and to mastering the *internal* danger before it has become an *external* one; and probably it is most often right in doing so. During this fight on two fronts – later there will be a third front as well[1] – the ego makes use of various procedures for fulfilling its task, which, to put it in general terms, is to avoid danger, anxiety and unpleasure. We call these procedures '*mechanisms of defence*'. Our knowledge of them is not yet

[1] [An oblique reference to the super-ego.]

sufficiently complete. Anna Freud's book (1936) has given us a first insight into their multiplicity and many-sided significance.

It was from one of those mechanisms, repression, that the study of neurotic processes took its whole start. There was never any doubt that repression was not the only procedure which the ego could employ for its purposes. Nevertheless, repression is something quite peculiar and is more sharply differentiated from the other mechanisms than they are from one another. I should like to make this relation to the other mechanisms clear by an analogy, though I know that in these matters analogies never carry us very far. Let us imagine what might have happened to a book, at a time when books were not printed in editions but were written out individually. We will suppose that a book of this kind contained statements which in later times were regarded as undesirable—as, for instance, according to Robert Eisler (1929), the writings of Flavius Josephus must have contained passages about Jesus Christ which were offensive to later Christendom. At the present day, the only defensive mechanism to which the official censorship could resort would be to confiscate and destroy every copy of the whole edition. At that time, however, various methods were used for making the book innocuous. One way would be for the offending passages to be thickly crossed through so that they were illegible. In that case they could not be transcribed, and the next copyist of the book would produce a text which was unexceptionable but which had gaps in certain passages, and so might be unintelligible in them. Another way, however, if the authorities were not satisfied with this, but wanted also to conceal any indication that the text had been mutilated, would be for them to proceed to distort the text. Single words would be left out or replaced by others, and new sentences interpolated. Best of all, the whole passage would be erased and a new one which said exactly the opposite put in its place. The next transcriber could then produce a text that aroused no suspicion but which was falsified. It no longer contained what the author wanted to say, and it is highly probable that the corrections had not been made in the direction of truth.

If the analogy is not pursued too strictly, we may say that repression has the same relation to the other methods of defence as omission has to distortion of the text, and we may discover in the different forms of this falsification parallels to the variety of

ways in which the ego is altered. An attempt may be made to raise the objection that the analogy goes wrong in an essential point, for the distortion of a text is the work of a tendentious censorship, no counterpart to which is to be found in the development of the ego. But this is not so; for a tendentious purpose of this kind is to a great extent represented by the compelling force of the pleasure principle. The psychical apparatus is intolerant of unpleasure, it has to fend it off at all costs, and if the perception of reality entails unpleasure, that perception—that is, the truth—must be sacrificed. Where external dangers are concerned, the individual can help himself for some time by flight and by avoiding the situation of danger, until he is strong enough later on to remove the threat by actively altering reality. But one cannot flee from oneself, flight is no help against internal dangers. And for that reason the defensive mechanisms of the ego are condemned to falsify one's internal perception and to give one only an imperfect and distorted picture of one's id. In its relations to the id, therefore, the ego is paralysed by its restrictions or blinded by its errors; and the result of this in the sphere of psychical events can only be compared to being out walking in a country one does not know and without having a good pair of legs.

The mechanisms of defence serve the purpose of keeping off dangers. It cannot be disputed that they are successful in this, and it is doubtful whether the ego could do without them altogether during its development. But it is also certain that they may become dangers themselves. It sometimes turns out that the ego has paid too high a price for the services they render it. The dynamic expenditure necessary for maintaining them, and the restrictions of the ego which they almost invariably entail, prove a heavy burden on the psychical economy. Moreover, these mechanisms are not relinquished after they have assisted the ego during the difficult years of its development. No one individual, of course, makes use of all the possible mechanisms of defence. Each person uses no more than a selection of them. But these become fixated in his ego. They become regular modes of reaction of his character, which are repeated throughout his life whenever a situation occurs that is similar to the original one. This turns them into infantilisms, and they share the fate of so many institutions which attempt to keep themselves in existence after the time of their usefulness

has passed. 'Vernunft wird Unsinn, Wohltat Plage' as the poet complains.[1] The adult's ego, with its increased strength, continues to defend itself against dangers which no longer exist in reality; indeed, it finds itself compelled to seek out those situations in reality which can serve as an approximate substitute for the original danger, so as to be able to justify, in relation to them, its maintaining its habitual modes of reaction. Thus we can easily understand how the defensive mechanisms, by bringing about an ever more extensive alienation from the external world and a permanent weakening of the ego, pave the way for, and encourage, the outbreak of neurosis.

At the moment, however, we are not concerned with the pathogenic role of the defensive mechanisms. What we are trying to discover is what influence the alteration of the ego which corresponds to them has upon our therapeutic efforts. The material for an answer to this question is given in the volume by Anna Freud to which I have already referred. The essential point is that the patient repeats these modes of reaction during the work of analysis as well, that he produces them before our eyes, as it were. In fact, it is only in this way that we get to know them. This does not mean that they make analysis impossible. On the contrary, they constitute half of our analytic task. The other half, the one which was first tackled by analysis in its early days, is the uncovering of what is hidden in the id. During the treatment our therapeutic work is constantly swinging backwards and forwards like a pendulum between a piece of id-analysis and a piece of ego-analysis. In the one case we want to make something from the id conscious, in the other we want to correct something in the ego. The crux of the matter is that the defensive mechanisms directed against former danger recur in the treatment as *resistances* against recovery. It follows from this that the ego treats recovery itself as a new danger.

The therapeutic effect depends on making conscious what is repressed, in the widest sense of the word, in the id. We prepare the way for this making conscious by interpretations and constructions,[2] but we have interpreted only for ourselves not for the patient so long as the ego holds on to its earlier defences and does not give up its resistances. Now these resistances, although

[1] [Reason becomes unreason, kindness torment.' Goethe, *Faust*, Part I, Scene 4.]

[2] [Cf. the paper on this subject (1937*d*), p. 255 below.]

they belong to the ego, are nevertheless unconscious and in some sense separated off within the ego. The analyst recognizes them more easily than he does the hidden material in the id. One might suppose that it would be sufficient to treat them like portions of the id and, by making them conscious, bring them into connection with the rest of the ego. In this way, we should suppose, one half of the task of analysis would be accomplished, we should not reckon on meeting with a resistance against the uncovering of resistances. But what happens is this. During the work on the resistances the ego withdraws – with a greater or less degree of seriousness – from the agreement on which the analytic situation is founded. The ego ceases to support our efforts at uncovering the id; it opposes them, disobeys the fundamental rule of analysis, and allows no further derivatives of the repressed to emerge. We cannot expect the patient to have a strong conviction of the curative power of analysis. He may have brought along with him a certain amount of confidence in his analyst, which will be strengthened to an effective point by the factors of the positive transference which will be aroused in him. Under the influence of the unpleasurable impulses which he feels as a result of the fresh activation of his defensive conflicts, negative transferences may now gain the upper hand and completely annul the analytic situation. The patient now regards the analyst as no more than a stranger who is making disagreeable demands on him, and he behaves towards him exactly like a child who does not like the stranger and does not believe anything he says. If the analyst tries to explain to the patient one of the distortions made by him for the purposes of defence, and to correct it, he finds him uncomprehending and inaccessible to sound arguments. Thus we see that there is a resistance against the uncovering of resistances, and the defensive mechanisms really do deserve the name which we gave them originally, before they had been more closely examined. They are resistances not only to the making conscious of contents of the id, but also to the analysis as a whole, and thus to recovery.

The effect brought about in the ego by the defences can rightly be described as an 'alteration of the ego' if by that we understand a deviation from the fiction of a normal ego which would guarantee unshakable loyalty to the work of analysis. It is easy, then, to accept the fact, shown by daily experience,

that the outcome of an analytic treatment depends essentially on the strength and on the depth of root of these resistances that bring about an alteration of the ego, Once again we are confronted with the importance of the quantitative factor, and once again we are reminded that analysis can only draw upon definite and limited amounts of energy which have to be measured against the hostile forces. And it seems as if victory is in fact as a rule on the side of the big battalions.

VI

The next question we come to is whether every alteration of the ego—in our sense of the term—is acquired during the defensive struggles of the earliest years. There can be no doubt about the answer. We have no reason to dispute the existence and importance of original, innate distinguishing characteristics of the ego. This is made certain by the single fact that each person makes a selection from the possible mechanisms of defence, that he always uses a few only of them and always the same ones [p. 237 above]. This would seem to indicate that each ego is endowed from the first with individual dispositions and trends, though it is true that we cannot specify their nature or what determines them. Moreover, we know that we must not exaggerate the difference between inherited and acquired characters into an antithesis; what was acquired by our forefathers certainly forms an important part of what we inherit. When we speak of an 'archaic heritage' [1] we are usually thinking only of the id and we seem to assume that at the beginning of the individual's life no ego is as yet in existence. But we shall not overlook the fact that id and ego are originally one; nor does it imply any mystical overvaluation of heredity if we think it credible that, even before the ego has come into existence, the lines of development, trends and reactions which it will later exhibit are already laid down for it. The psychological peculiarities of families, races and nations, even in their attitude to analysis, allow of no other explanation. Indeed, more than this: analytic experience has forced on us a conviction that even particular psychical contents, such as symbolism, have no other sources than hereditary transmission, and researches in various

[1] [See an Editor's Note to Part I of the Third Essay in *Moses and Monotheism* (1939*a*), p. 102 above.]

fields of social anthropology, make it plausible to suppose that other, equally specialized precipitates left by early human development are also present in the archaic heritage.

With the recognition that the properties of the ego which we meet with in the form of resistances can equally well be determined by heredity as acquired in defensive struggles, the topographical distinction between what is ego and what is id loses much of its value for our investigation. If we advance a step further in our analytic experience, we come upon resistances of another kind, which we can no longer localize and which seem to depend on fundamental conditions in the mental apparatus. I can only give a few examples of this type of resistance; the whole field of enquiry is still bewilderingly strange and insufficiently explored. We come across people, for instance, to whom we should be inclined to attribute a special 'adhesiveness of the libido'.[1] The processes which the treatment sets in motion in them are so much slower than in other people because, apparently, they cannot make up their minds to detach libidinal cathexes from one object and displace them on to another, although we can discover no special reason for this cathectic loyalty. One meets with the opposite type of person, too, in whom the libido seems particularly mobile; it enters readily upon the new cathexes suggested by analysis, abandoning its former ones in exchange for them. The difference between the two types is comparable to the one felt by a sculptor, according to whether he works in hard stone or soft clay. Unfortunately, in this second type the results of analysis often turn out to be very impermanent: the new cathexes are soon given up once more, and we have an impression, not of having worked in clay, but of having written on water. In the words of the proverb 'Soon got, soon gone.'[2]

In another group of cases we are surprised by an attitude in our patients which can only be put down to a depletion of the plasticity, the capacity for change and further development, which we should ordinarily expect. We are, it is true, prepared

[1] [The term occurs in Lecture XXII of the *Introductory Lectures* (1916–17), *Standard Ed.*, **16**, 300. It is characteristic and the more generalized 'psychical inertia' discussed below are not always treated separately in Freud's earlier writings. A list of a number of passages in which the topics are touched upon is given in an Editor's footnote to 'A Case of Paranoia' (1915*f*), *Standard Ed.*, **14**, 272.]

[2] ['*Wie gewonnen, so zerronnen.*']

to find in analysis a certain amount of psychical inertia.[1] When the work of analysis has opened up new paths for an instinctual impulse, we almost invariably observe that the impulse does not enter upon them without marked hesitation. We have called this behaviour, perhaps not quite correctly, 'resistance from the id'.[2] But with the patients I here have in mind, all the mental processes, relationships and distributions of force are unchangeable, fixed and rigid. One finds the same thing in very old people, in which case it is explained as being due to what is described as force of habit or an exhaustion of receptivity—a kind of psychical entropy.[3] But we are dealing here with people who are still young. Our theoretical knowledge does not seem adequate to give a correct explanation of such types. Probably some temporal characteristics are concerned—some alterations of a rhythm of development in psychical life which we have not yet appreciated.

In yet another group of cases the distinguishing characteristics of the ego, which are to be held responsible as sources of resistance against analytic treatment and as impediments to therapeutic success, may spring from different and deeper roots. Here we are dealing with the ultimate things which psychological research can learn about: the behaviour of the two primal instincts, their distribution, merging and defusion—things which we cannot think of as being confined to a single province of the mental apparatus, the id, the ego or the super-ego. No stronger impression arises from the resistances during the work of analysis than of there being a force which is defending itself by every possible means against recovery and which is absolutely resolved to hold on to illness and suffering. One portion of this force has been recognized by us, undoubtedly with justice, as the sense of guilt and need for punishment, and has been localized by us in the ego's relation to the super-ego. But this is only the portion of it which is, as it were, psychically bound by the super-ego and thus becomes recognizable; other quotas of the same force, whether bound or free,

[1] [See footnote 1 on last page.]

[2] [See Addendum A [illegible] to *Inhibitions, Symptoms and Anxiety* (1926*d*), *Standard Ed.*, **20**, 160.]

[3] [The same analogy occurs in a passage in the 'Wolf Man' case history (1918*b*), dealing with this same psychological characteristic. *Standard Ed.*, **17**, 116.]

may be at work in other, unspecified places. If we take into consideration the total picture made up of the phenomena of masochism immanent in so many people, the negative therapeutic reaction and the sense of guilt found in so many neurotics, we shall no longer be able to adhere to the belief that mental events are exclusively governed by the desire for pleasure. These phenomena are unmistakable indications of the presence of a power in mental life which we call the instinct of aggression or of destruction according to its aims, and which we trace back to the original death instinct of living matter. It is not a question of an antithesis between an optimistic and a pessimistic theory of life. Only by the concurrent or mutually opposing action[1] of the two primal instincts Eros and the death-instinct —,never by one or the other alone, can we explain the rich multiplicity of the phenomena of life.

How parts of these two classes of instincts combine to fulfil the various vital functions, under what conditions such combinations grow looser or break up, to what disturbances these changes correspond and with what feelings the perceptual scale of the pleasure principle replies to them these are problems whose elucidation would be the most rewarding achievement of psychological research. For the moment we must bow to the superiority of the forces against which we see our efforts come to nothing. Even to exert a psychical influence on simple masochism is a severe tax upon our powers.

In studying the phenomena which testify to the activity of the destructive instinct, we are not confined to observations on pathological material. Numerous facts of normal mental life call for an explanation of this kind, and the sharper our eye grows, the more copiously they strike us. The subject is too new and too important for me to treat it as a side-issue in this discussion. I shall therefore content myself with selecting a few sample cases.

Here is one instance. It is well known that at all periods there have been, as there still are, people who can take as their sexual objects members of their own sex as well as of the opposite one,

[1] [The phrase was a favourite one of Freud's It will be found, for instance, in the first paragraph of *The Interpretation of Dreams* (1900a), *Standard Ed.*, **4**, 1 His liking for it reflects his loyalty to a 'fundamental dualistic point of view'. Cf. *The Ego and the Id* (1923b), ibid., **19**, 40, and p. 246 below.]

without the one trend interfering with the other. We call such people bisexuals, and we accept their existence without feeling much surprise about it. We have come to learn, however, that every human being is bisexual in this sense and that his libido is distributed, either in a manifest or a latent fashion, over objects of both sexes. But we are struck by the following point. Whereas in the first class of people the two trends have got on together without clashing, in the second and more numerous class they are in a state of irreconcilable conflict. A man's heterosexuality will not put up with any homosexuality, and *vice versa*. If the former is the stronger it succeeds in keeping the latter latent and forcing it away from satisfaction in reality. On the other hand, there is no greater danger for a man's heterosexual function than its being disturbed by his latent homosexuality. We might attempt to explain this by saying that each individual only has a certain quota of libido at his disposal, for which the two rival trends have to struggle. But it is not clear why the rivals do not always divide up the available quota of libido between them according to their relative strength, since they are able to do so in a number of cases. We are forced to the conclusion that the tendency to a conflict is something special, something which is newly added to the situation, irrespective of the quantity of libido. An independently emerging tendency to conflict of this sort can scarcely be attributed to anything but the intervention of an element of free aggressiveness.

If we recognize the case we are discussing as an expression of the destructive or aggressive instinct, the question at once arises whether this view should not be extended to other instances of conflict, and, indeed, whether all that we know about psychical conflict should not be revised from this new angle. After all, we assume that in the course of man's development from a primitive state to a civilized one his aggressiveness undergoes a very considerable degree of internalization or turning inwards, and so, his internal conflicts would certainly be the proper equivalent for the external struggles which have then ceased. I am well aware that the dualistic theory according to which an instinct of death or of destruction or aggression claims equal rights as a partner with Eros as manifested in the libido, has found little sympathy and has not really been accepted even among psychoanalysts. This made me all the more pleased when not long ago I came upon this theory of mine in the writings of one of the

great thinkers of ancient Greece. I am very ready to give up the prestige of originality for the sake of such a confirmation, especially as I can never be certain, in view of the wide extent of my reading in early years, whether what I took for a new creation might not be an effect of cryptomnesia.[1]

Empedocles of Acragas (Girgenti),[2] born about 495 B.C., is one of the grandest and most remarkable figures in the history of Greek civilization. The activities of his many-sided personality pursued the most varied directions. He was an investigator and a thinker, a prophet and a magician, a politician, a philanthropist and a physician with a knowledge of natural science. He was said to have freed the town of Selinunte from malaria, and his contemporaries revered him as a god. His mind seems to have united the sharpest contrasts. He was exact and sober in his physical and physiological researches, yet he did not shrink from the obscurities of mysticism, and built up cosmic speculations of astonishingly imaginative boldness. Capelle compares him with Dr. Faust 'to whom many a secret was revealed'.[3] Born as he was at a time when the realm of science was not yet divided into so many provinces, some of his theories must inevitably strike us as primitive. He explained the variety of things by the mixture of the four elements, earth, air, fire and water. He held that all nature was animate, and he believed in the transmigration of souls. But he also included in his theoretical body of knowledge such modern ideas as the gradual evolution of living creatures, the survival of the fittest and a recognition of the part played by chance (τύχη) in that evolution.

But the theory of Empedocles which especially deserves our interest is one which approximates so closely to the psychoanalytic theory of the instincts that we should be tempted to maintain that the two are identical, if it were not for the difference that the Greek philosopher's theory is a cosmic phantasy while ours is content to claim biological validity. At the same time, the fact that Empedocles ascribes to the universe the same

[1] [Cf. some remarks on this subject in a paper by Freud on Josef Popper-Lynkeus (1923). *Cf. Standard Ed.*, 19, 262 and 263 *n.*]

[2] I have based what follows on a work by Wilhelm Capelle (1935). [The Sicilian town is more commonly known as Agrigentum.]

[3] [*Dem gar manch Geheimnis wurde kund.*' Modified from a line in Faust's first speech. Goethe, *Faust*, Part I, Scene 1.]

animate nature as to individual organisms robs this difference of much of its importance.

The philosopher taught that two principles governed events in the life of the universe and in the life of the mind, and that those principles were everlastingly at war with each other. He called them *φιλία* (love) and *νεῖκος* (strife). Of these two powers—which he conceived of as being at bottom 'natural forces operating like instincts, and by no means intelligences with a conscious purpose' [1]—the one strives to agglomerate the primal particles of the four elements into a single unity, while the other, on the contrary, seeks to undo all those fusions and to separate the primal particles of the elements from one another. Empedocles thought of the process of the universe as a continuous, never-ceasing alternation of periods, in which the one or the other of the two fundamental forces gain the upper hand, so that at one time love and at another strife puts its purpose completely into effect and dominates the universe, after which the other, vanquished, side asserts itself and in its turn defeats its partner.

The two fundamental principles of Empedocles—*φιλία* and *νεῖκος*—are, both in name and function, the same as our two primal instincts, *Eros* and *destructiveness*, the first of which endeavours to combine what exists into ever greater unities, while the second endeavours to dissolve those combinations and to destroy the structures to which they have given rise. We shall not be surprised, however, to find that, on its re-emergence after two and a half millennia, this theory has been altered in some of its features. Apart from the restriction to the biophysical field which is imposed on us, we no longer have as our basic substances the four elements of Empedocles; what is living has been sharply differentiated from what is inanimate, and we no longer think of the mingling and separation of particles of substance, but of the soldering together and defusion of instinctual components. Moreover, we have provided some sort of biological basis for the principle of 'strife' by tracing back our instinct of destruction to the death instinct, to the urge of what is living to return to an inanimate state. This is not to deny that an analogous instinct[2] already existed earlier, nor, of course, to assert that an instinct of this sort only came into existence with

[1] Capelle (1935), 186.

[2] [I.e. analogous to the death instinct.]

the emergence of life. And no one can foresee in what guise the nucleus of truth contained in the theory of Empedocles will present itself to later understanding.[1]

VII

In 1927, Ferenczi read an instructive paper on the problem of the termination of analyses.[2] It ends with a comforting assurance that 'analysis is not an endless process, but one which can be brought to a natural end with sufficient skill and patience on the analyst's part'.[3] The paper as a whole, however, seems to me to be in the nature of a warning not to aim at shortening analysis but at deepening it. Ferenczi makes the further important point that success depends very largely on the analyst's having learnt sufficiently from his own 'errors and mistakes' and having got the better of 'the weak points in his own personality'.[4] This provides an important supplement to our theme. Among the factors which influence the prospects of analytic treatment and add to its difficulties in the same manner as the resistances, must be reckoned not only the nature of the patient's ego but the individuality of the analyst.

It cannot be disputed that analysts in their own personalities have not invariably come up to the standard of psychical normality to which they wish to educate their patients. Opponents of analysis often point to this fact with scorn and use it as an argument to show the uselessness of analytic exertions. We might reject this criticism as making unjustifiable demands. Analysts are people who have learned to practise a particular art; alongside of this, they may be allowed to be human beings like anyone else. After all, nobody maintains that a physician is incapable of treating internal diseases if his own internal organs are not sound; on the contrary, it may be argued that

[1] [Empedocles was mentioned once more by Freud in a footnote to Chapter II of his posthumous *Outline of Psycho-Analysis* (1940*a* [1938]), p. 149 above.—Freud made some further remarks on the destructive instinct in a letter written shortly after this paper to Princess Marie Bonaparte. An extract from it appears in the Editor's Introduction to *Civilization and its Discontents* (1930*a*), *Standard Ed.*, **21**, 63.]

[2] [This was a paper read at the Innsbruck Psycho-Analytical Congress in 1927. It was published in the following year.]

[3] [Ferenczi, 1928; English trans., 1955, 86.]

[4] [Ferenczi, loc. cit.]

there are certain advantages in a man who is himself threatened with tuberculosis specializing in the treatment of persons suffering from that disease. But the cases are not on all fours. So long as he is capable of practising at all, a doctor suffering from disease of the lungs or heart is not handicapped either in diagnosing or treating internal complaints; whereas the special conditions of analytic work do actually cause the analyst's own defects to interfere with his making a correct assessment of the state of things in his patient and reacting to them in a useful way. It is therefore reasonable to expect of an analyst, as a part of his qualifications, a considerable degree of mental normality and correctness. In addition, he must possess some kind of superiority, so that in certain analytic situations he can act as a model for his patient and in others as a teacher. And finally we must not forget that the analytic relationship is based on a love of truth—that is, on a recognition of reality—and that it precludes any kind of sham or deceit.

Here let us pause for a moment to assure the analyst that he has our sincere sympathy in the very exacting demands he has to fulfil in carrying out his activities. It almost looks as if analysis were the third of those 'impossible' professions in which one can be sure beforehand of achieving unsatisfying results. The other two, which have been known much longer, are education and government.[1] Obviously we cannot demand that the prospective analyst should be a perfect being before he takes up analysis, in other words that only persons of such high and rare perfection should enter the profession. But where and how is the poor wretch to acquire the ideal qualifications which he will need in his profession? The answer is, in an analysis of himself, with which his preparation for his future activity begins. For practical reasons this analysis can only be short and incomplete. Its main object is to enable his teacher to make a judgement as to whether the candidate can be accepted for further training. It has accomplished its purpose if it gives the learner a firm conviction of the existence of the unconscious, if it enables him, when repressed material emerges, to perceive in himself things which would otherwise be incredible to him, and if it shows him a first sample of the technique which has proved to be the only effective one in analytic work. Thus alone

[1] [Cf. a similar passage in Freud's review of Aichhorn's *Wayward Youth* (Freud, 1925*f*, *Standard Ed.*, **19**, 273).]

would not suffice for his instruction, but we reckon on the stimuli that he has received in his own analysis not ceasing when it ends and on the processes of remodelling the ego continuing spontaneously in the analysed subject and making use of all subsequent experiences in this newly acquired sense. This does in fact happen, and in so far as it happens it makes the analysed subject qualified to be an analyst himself.

Unfortunately something else happens as well. In trying to describe this, one can only rely on impressions. Hostility on the one side and partisanship on the other create an atmosphere which is not favourable to objective investigation. It seems that a number of analysts learn to make use of defensive mechanisms which allow them to divert the implications and demands of analysis from themselves—probably by directing them on to other people—so that they themselves remain as they are and are able to withdraw from the critical and corrective influence of analysis. Such an event may justify the words of the writer who warns us that when a man is endowed with power it is hard for him not to misuse it.[1] Sometimes, when we try to understand this, we are driven into drawing a disagreeable analogy with the effect of X-rays on people who handle them without taking special precautions. It would not be surprising if the effect of a constant preoccupation with all the repressed material which struggles for freedom in the human mind were to stir up in the analyst as well all the instinctual demands which he is otherwise able to keep under suppression. These, too, are 'dangers of analysis', though they threaten, not the passive but the active partner in the analytic situation; and we ought not to neglect to meet them. There can be no doubt how this is to be done. Every analyst should periodically—at intervals of five years or so—submit himself to analysis once more, without feeling ashamed of taking this step. This would mean, then, that not only the therapeutic analysis of patients but his own analysis would change from a terminable into an interminable task.

At this point, however, we must guard against a misconception. I am not intending to assert that analysis is altogether an endless business. Whatever one's theoretical attitude to the question may be, the termination of an analysis is, I think a practical matter. Every experienced analyst will be able to

[1] Anatole France, *La révolte des anges*.

recall a number of cases in which he has bidden his patient a permanent farewell *rebus bene gestis*.[1] In cases of what is known as character-analysis there is a far smaller discrepancy between theory and practice. Here it is not easy to foresee a natural end, even if one avoids any exaggerated expectations and sets the analysis no excessive tasks. Our aim will not be to rub off every peculiarity of human character for the sake of a schematic 'normality', nor yet to demand that the person who has been 'thoroughly analysed' shall feel no passions and develop no internal conflicts. The business of the analysis is to secure the best possible psychological conditions for the functions of the ego; with that it has discharged its task.

VIII

Both in therapeutic and in character-analyses we notice that two themes come into especial prominence and give the analyst an unusual amount of trouble. It soon becomes evident that a general principle is at work here. The two themes are tied to the distinction between the sexes; one is as characteristic of males as the other is of females. In spite of the dissimilarity of their content, there is an obvious correspondence between them. Something which both sexes have in common has been forced, by the difference between the sexes, into different forms of expression.

The two corresponding themes are in the female, an *envy for the penis* – a positive striving to possess a male genital – and, in the male, a struggle against his passive or feminine attitude to another male. What is common to the two themes was singled out at an early date by psycho-analytic nomenclature as an attitude towards the castration complex. Subsequently Alfred Adler brought the term 'masculine protest' into current use. It fits the case of males perfectly; but I think that, from the start, 'repudiation of femininity' would have been the correct description of this remarkable feature in the psychical life of human beings.

In trying to introduce this factor into the structure of our theory, we must not overlook the fact that it cannot, by its very nature, occupy the same position in both sexes. In males the striving to be masculine is completely ego-syntonic from

[1] ['Things having gone well.']

the first; the passive attitude, since it presupposes an acceptance of castration, is energetically repressed, and often its presence is only indicated by excessive overcompensations. In females, too, the striving to be masculine is ego-syntonic at a certain period —namely in the phallic phase, before the development to femininity has set in. But it then succumbs to the momentous process of repression whose outcome, as has so often been shown, determines the fortunes of a woman's femininity.[1] A great deal depends on whether a sufficient amount of her masculinity complex escapes repression and exercises a permanent influence on her character. Normally, large portions of the complex are transformed and contribute to the construction of her femininity: the appeased wish for a penis is destined to be converted into a wish for a baby and for a husband, who possesses a penis. It is strange, however, how often we find that the wish for masculinity has been retained in the unconscious and, from out of its state of repression, exercises a disturbing influence.

As will be seen from what I have said, in both cases it is the attitude proper to the opposite sex which has succumbed to repression. I have already stated elsewhere[2] that it was Wilhelm Fliess who called my attention to this point. Fliess was inclined to regard the antithesis between the sexes as the true cause and primal motive force of repression. I am only repeating what I said then in disagreeing with his view, when I decline to sexualize repression in this way — that is, to explain it on biological grounds instead of on purely psychological ones.

The paramount importance of these two themes — in females the wish for a penis and in males the struggle against passivity —did not escape Ferenczi's notice. In the paper read by him in 1927 he made it a requirement that in every successful analysis those two complexes must have been mastered.[3] I

[1] [Cf., for instance, 'Female Sexuality' (1931*b*), *Standard Ed.*, **21**, 229 f.]

[2] '"A Child is being Beaten"' (1919*e*), *Standard Ed.*, **17**, 200 ff. [Actually Fliess is not mentioned by name in that paper.]

[3] '. . . Every male patient must attain a feeling of equality in relation to the physician as a sign that he has overcome his fear of castration; every female patient, if her neurosis is to be regarded as fully disposed of, must have got rid of her masculinity complex and must emotionally accept without a trace of resentment the implications of her female role.' (Ferenczi, 1928, 8 [English trans., 84].)

should like to add that, speaking from my own experience, I think that in this Ferenczi was asking a very great deal. At no other point in one's analytic work does one suffer more from an oppressive feeling that all one's repeated efforts have been in vain, and from a suspicion that one has been 'preaching to the winds', than when one is trying to persuade a woman to abandon her wish for a penis on the ground of its being unrealizable or when one is seeking to convince a man that a passive attitude to men does not always signify castration and that it is indispensable in many relationships in life. The rebellious overcompensation of the male produces one of the strongest transference-resistances. He refuses to subject himself to a father-substitute, or to feel indebted to him for anything, and consequently he refuses to accept his recovery from the doctor. No analogous transference can arise from the female's wish for a penis, but it is the source of outbreaks of severe depression in her, owing to an internal conviction that the analysis will be of no use and that nothing can be done to help her. And we can only agree that she is right, when we learn that her strongest motive in coming for treatment was the hope that, after all, she might still obtain a male organ, the lack of which was so painful to her.

But we also learn from this that it is not important in what form the resistance appears, whether as a transference or not. The decisive thing remains that the resistance prevents any change from taking place—that everything stays as it was. We often have the impression that with the wish for a penis and the masculine protest we have penetrated through all the psychological strata and have reached bedrock, and that thus our activities are at an end. This is probably true, since, for the psychical field, the biological field does in fact play the part of the underlying bedrock. The repudiation of femininity can be nothing else than a biological fact, a part of the great riddle of sex.[1] It would be hard to say whether and when we have

[1] We must not be misled by the term 'masculine protest' into supposing that what the man is repudiating is his passive attitude [as such] —what might be called the social aspect of femininity. Such a view is contradicted by an observation that is easily verifiable—namely that such men often display a masochistic attitude—a state that amounts to bondage—towards women. What they reject is not passivity in general, but passivity towards a male. In other words, the 'masculine protest' is

succeeded in mastering this factor in an analytic treatment. We can only console ourselves with the certainty that we have given the person analysed every possible encouragement to re-examine and alter his attitude to it.

in fact nothing else than castration anxiety. [The state of sexual 'bondage' in men had been alluded to by Freud in his paper on 'The Taboo of Virginity' (1918*a*), *Standard Ed.*, **11**, 194.]

CONSTRUCTIONS IN ANALYSIS
(1937)

KONSTRUKTIONEN IN DER ANALYSE

(a) GERMAN EDITIONS:
1937 *Int. Z. Psychoanal.*, **23** (4), 459–69.
1950 *G.W.*, **16**, 43–56.

(b) ENGLISH TRANSLATION:
'Constructions in Analysis'
1938 *Int. J. Psycho-Anal.*, **19** (4), 377–87. (Tr. James Strachey.)
1950 *C.P.*, **5**, 358–71. (Revised reprint of above.)

The present translation is a corrected reprint of the one published in 1950.

This paper was published in December, 1937.

Though, as Freud remarks, constructions have received much less attention than interpretations in discussions of analytic technique, his own writings contain many allusions to them. There are two or three full-length examples of them in his case histories: in the 'Rat Man' analysis (1909*d*), *Standard Ed.*, **10**, 182 and 205, and in the 'Wolf Man' analysis (1918*b*). The whole latter case revolves around a construction; but the question is specifically discussed in Section V (*Standard Ed.*, **17**, 50 ff.). Finally, constructions played a large part in the case history of the homosexual girl (1920*a*), as is made plain in Section I (ibid., **18**, 152).

The paper ends with a discussion of a question in which Freud was much interested at this period – the distinction between what he described as 'historical' and 'material' truth.

CONSTRUCTIONS IN ANALYSIS

I

It has always seemed to me to be greatly to the credit of a certain well-known man of science that he treated psychoanalysis fairly at a time when most other people felt themselves under no such obligation. On one occasion, nevertheless, he gave expression to an opinion upon analytic technique which was at once derogatory and unjust. He said that in giving interpretations to a patient we treat him upon the famous principle of 'Heads I win, tails you lose'.[1] That is to say, if the patient agrees with us, then the interpretation is right; but if he contradicts us, that is only a sign of his resistance, which again shows that we are right. In this way we are always in the right against the poor helpless wretch whom we are analysing, no matter how he may respond to what we put forward. Now, since it is in fact true that a 'No' from one of our patients is not as a rule enough to make us abandon an interpretation as incorrect, a revelation such as this of the nature of our technique has been most welcome to the opponents of analysis. It is therefore worth while to give a detailed account of how we are accustomed to arrive at an assessment of the 'Yes' or 'No' of our patients during analytic treatment—of their expression of agreement or of denial. The practising analyst will naturally learn nothing in the course of this apologia that he does not know already.[2]

It is familiar ground that the work of analysis aims at inducing the patient to give up the repressions (using the word in the widest sense) belonging to his early development and to replace them by reactions of a sort that would correspond to a psychically mature condition. With this purpose in view he must be brought to recollect certain experiences and the affective

[1] [In English in the original.]

[2] [This discussion takes up earlier ones in Freud's paper on 'Negation' (1925*h*, *Standard Ed.*, **19**, 235 and 239). Cf. also a passage in the first chapter of the 'Dora' analysis (1905*e*, ibid., **7**, 57 and a footnote added to the same passage in 1923, also a footnote to Chapter I (D) of the 'Rat Man' analysis (1909*d*), ibid., **10**, 183 *n*.]

impulses up called by them which he has for the time being forgotten. We know that his present symptoms and inhibitions are the consequences of repressions of this kind, thus that they are a substitute for these things that he has forgotten. What sort of material does he put at our disposal which we can make use of to put him on the way to recovering the lost memories? All kinds of things. He gives us fragments of these memories in his dreams, invaluable in themselves but seriously distorted as a rule by all the factors concerned in the formation of dreams. Again, he produces ideas, if he gives himself up to 'free association', in which we can discover allusions to the repressed experiences and derivatives of the suppressed affective impulses as well as of the reactions against them. And, finally, there are hints of repetitions of the affects belonging to the repressed material to be found in actions performed by the patient, some fairly important, some trivial, both inside and outside the analytic situation. Our experience has shown that the relation of transference, which becomes established towards the analyst, is particularly calculated to favour the return of these emotional connections. It is out of such raw material (if we may so describe it)—that we have to put together what we are in search of.

What we are in search of is a picture of the patient's forgotten years that shall be alike trustworthy and in all essential respects complete. But at this point we are reminded that the work of analysis consists of two quite different portions, that it is carried on in two separate localities, that it involves two people, to each of whom a distinct task is assigned. It may for a moment seem strange that such a fundamental fact should not have been pointed out long ago, but it will immediately be perceived that there was nothing being kept back in this, that it is a fact which is universally known and, as it were, self-evident and is merely being brought into relief here and separately examined for a particular purpose. We all know that the person who is being analysed has to be induced to remember something that has been experienced by him and repressed; and the dynamic determinants of this process are so interesting that the other portion of the work, the task performed by the analyst, has been pushed into the background. The analyst has neither experienced nor repressed any of the material under consideration; his task cannot be to remember anything. What then is his task? His task is to make out what has been for-

gotten from the traces which it has left behind or, more correctly, to *construct* it. The time and manner in which he conveys his constructions to the person who is being analysed, as well as the explanations with which he accompanies them, constitute the link between the two portions of the work of analysis, between his own part and that of the patient.

His work of construction, or, if it is preferred, of reconstruction, resembles to a great extent an archaeologist's excavation of some dwelling-place that has been destroyed and buried or of some ancient edifice. The two processes are in fact identical, except that the analyst works under better conditions and has more material at his command to assist him, since what he is dealing with is not something destroyed but something that is still alive — and perhaps for another reason as well. But just as the archaeologist builds up the walls of the building from the foundations that have remained standing, determines the number and position of the columns from depressions in the floor and reconstructs the mural decorations and paintings from the remains found in the debris, so does the analyst proceed when he draws his inferences from the fragments of memories, from the associations and from the behaviour of the subject of the analysis. Both of them have an undisputed right to reconstruct by means of supplementing and combining the surviving remains. Both of them, moreover, are subject to many of the same difficulties and sources of error. One of the most ticklish problems that confronts the archaeologist is notoriously the determination of the relative age of his finds; and if an object makes its appearance in some particular level, it often remains to be decided whether it belongs to that level or whether it was carried down to that level owing to some subsequent disturbance. It is easy to imagine the corresponding doubts that arise in the case of analytic constructions.

The analyst, as we have said, works under more favourable conditions than the archaeologist since he has at his disposal material which can have no counterpart in excavations, such as the repetitions of reactions dating from infancy and all that is indicated by the transference in connection with these repetitions. But in addition to this it must be borne in mind that the excavator is dealing with destroyed objects of which large and important portions have quite certainly been lost, by mechanical violence, by fire and by plundering. No amount of effort

can result in their discovery and lead to their being united with the surviving remains. The one and only course open is that of reconstruction, which for this reason can often reach only a certain degree of probability. But it is different with the psychical object whose early history the analyst is seeking to recover. Here we are regularly met by a situation which with the archaeological object occurs only in such rare circumstances as those of Pompeii or of the tomb of Tut'ankhamun. All of the essentials are preserved; even things that seem completely forgotten are present somehow and somewhere, and have merely been buried and made inaccessible to the subject. Indeed, it may, as we know, be doubted whether any psychical structure can really be the victim of total destruction. It depends only upon analytic technique whether we shall succeed in bringing what is concealed completely to light. There are only two other facts that weigh against the extraordinary advantage which is thus enjoyed by the work of analysis: namely, that psychical objects are incomparably more complicated than the excavator's material ones and that we have insufficient knowledge of what we may expect to find, since their finer structure contains so much that is still mysterious. But our comparison between the two forms of work can go no further than this; for the main difference between them lies in the fact that for the archaeologist the reconstruction is the aim and end of his endeavours while for analysis the construction is only a preliminary labour.

II

It is not, however, a preliminary labour in the sense that the whole of it must be completed before the next piece of work can be begun, as, for instance, is the case with house-building, where all the walls must be erected and all the windows inserted before the internal decoration of the rooms can be taken in hand. Every analyst knows that things happen differently in an analytic treatment and that there both kinds of work are carried on side by side, the one kind being always a little ahead and the other following upon it. The analyst finishes a piece of construction and communicates it to the subject of the analysis so that it may work upon him; he then constructs a further piece out of the fresh material pouring in upon him, deals with it in the same way and proceeds in this alternating fashion until

the end. If, in accounts of analytic technique, so little is said about 'constructions', that is because 'interpretations' and their effects are spoken of instead. But I think that 'construction' is by far the more appropriate description. 'Interpretation' applies to something that one does to some single element of the material, such as an association or a parapraxis. But it is a 'construction' when one lays before the subject of the analysis a piece of his early history that he has forgotten, in some such way as this: 'Up to your *n*th year you regarded yourself as the sole and unlimited possessor of your mother; then came another baby and brought you grave disillusionment. Your mother left you for some time, and even after her reappearance she was never again devoted to you exclusively. Your feelings towards your mother became ambivalent, your father gained a new importance for you,' . . . and so on.

In the present paper our attention will be turned exclusively to this preliminary labour performed by constructions. And here, at the very start, the question arises of what guarantee we have while we are working on these constructions that we are not making mistakes and risking the success of the treatment by putting forward some construction that is incorrect. It may seem that no general reply can in any event be given to this question; but even before discussing it we may lend our ear to some comforting information that is afforded by analytic experience. For we learn from it that no damage is done if, for once in a way, we make a mistake and offer the patient a wrong construction as the probable historical truth. A waste of time is, of course, involved, and anyone who does nothing but present the patient with false combinations will neither create a very good impression on him nor carry the treatment very far; but a single mistake of the sort can do no harm.[1] What in fact occurs in such an event is rather that the patient remains as though he were untouched by what has been said and reacts to it with neither a 'Yes' nor a 'No'. This may possibly mean no more than that his reaction is postponed; but if nothing further develops we may conclude that we have made a mistake and we shall admit as much to the patient at some suitable opportunity without sacrificing any

[1] [An example of an incorrect construction is mentioned at the beginning of Section III of the 'Wolf Man' case history (1918*b*), *Standard Ed.*, **17**, 19.]

of our authority. Such an opportunity will arise when some new material has come to light which allows us to make a better construction and so to correct our error. In this way the false construction drops out, as if it had never been made; and, indeed, we often get an impression as though, to borrow the words of Polonius, our bait of falsehood had taken a carp of truth. The danger of our leading a patient astray by suggestion, by persuading him to accept things which we ourselves believe but which he ought not to, has certainly been enormously exaggerated. An analyst would have had to behave very incorrectly before such a misfortune could overtake him; above all, he would have to blame himself with not allowing his patients to have their say. I can assert without boasting that such an abuse of 'suggestion' has never occurred in my practice.

It already follows from what has been said that we are not at all inclined to neglect the indications that can be inferred from the patient's reaction when we have offered him one of our constructions. The point must be gone into in detail. It is true that we do not accept the 'No' of a person under analysis at its face value; but neither do we allow his 'Yes' to pass. There is no justification for accusing us of invariably twisting his remarks into a confirmation. In reality things are not so simple and we do not make it so easy for ourselves to come to a conclusion.

A plain 'Yes' from a patient is by no means unambiguous. It can indeed signify that he recognizes the correctness of the construction that has been presented to him; but it can also be meaningless, or can even deserve to be described as 'hypocritical', since it may be convenient for his resistance to make use of an assent in such circumstances in order to prolong the concealment of a truth that has not been discovered. The 'Yes' has no value unless it is followed by indirect confirmations, unless the patient, immediately after his 'Yes', produces new memories which complete and extend the construction. Only in such an event do we consider that the 'Yes' has dealt completely with the subject under discussion.[1]

A 'No' from a person in analysis is quite as ambiguous as a 'Yes', and is indeed of even less value. In some rare cases it turns out to be the expression of a legitimate dissent. Far more

[1] [Cf. a paragraph in Section VII of 'Remarks on the Theory and Practice of Dream-Interpretation' (1923c), *Standard Ed.*, 19, 115.]

frequently it expresses a resistance which may have been evoked by the subject-matter of the construction that has been put forward but which may just as easily have arisen from some other factor in the complex analytic situation. Thus, a patient's 'No' is no evidence of the correctness of a construction, though it is perfectly compatible with it. Since every such construction is an incomplete one, since it covers only a small fragment of the forgotten events, we are free to suppose that the patient is not in fact disputing what has been said to him but is basing his contradiction upon the part that has not yet been uncovered. As a rule he will not give his assent until he has learnt the whole truth—which often covers a very great deal of ground. So that the only safe interpretation of his 'No' is that it points to incompleteness; there can be no doubt that the construction has not told him everything.

It appears, therefore, that the direct utterances of the patient after he has been offered a construction afford very little evidence upon the question whether we have been right or wrong. It is of all the greater interest that there are indirect forms of confirmation which are in every respect trustworthy. One of these is a form of words that is used (as though by general agreement) with very little variation by the most different people: 'I didn't ever think' (or 'I shouldn't ever have thought') 'that' or 'of that').[1] This can be translated without any hesitation into: 'Yes, you're right this time – about my *unconscious*.' Unfortunately this formula, which is so welcome to the analyst, reaches his ears more often after single interpretations than after he has produced an extensive construction. An equally valuable confirmation is implied (expressed this time positively) when the patient answers with an association which contains something similar or analogous to the content of the construction. Instead of taking an example of this from an analysis (which would be easy to find but lengthy to describe), I prefer to give an account of a small extra-analytical experience which presents a similar situation so strikingly that it produces an almost comic effect. It concerned one of my colleagues who – it was long ago – had chosen me as a consultant in his medical practice. One day, however, he brought his young wife to see me, as she was causing him trouble. She refused on all sorts of

[1] [Almost exactly the same phrases occur at the end of the paper on 'Negation' (1925*h*), *Standard Ed.*, **19**, 239.]

pretexts to have sexual relations with him, and what he expected of me was evidently that I should lay before her the consequences of her ill-advised behaviour. I went into the matter and explained to her that her refusal would probably have unfortunate results for her husband's health or would lay him open to temptations that might lead to a break-up of their marriage. At this point he suddenly interrupted me with the remark: 'The Englishman you diagnosed as suffering from a cerebral tumour has died too.' At first the remark seemed incomprehensible, the 'too' in his sentence was a mystery, for we had not been speaking of anyone else who had died. But a short time afterwards I understood. The man was evidently intending to confirm what I had been saying, he was meaning to say: 'Yes, you're certainly quite right. Your diagnosis was confirmed in the case of the other patient too.' It was an exact parallel to the indirect confirmations that we obtain in analysis from associations. I will not attempt to deny that there were other thoughts as well, put on one side by my colleague, which had a share in determining his remark.

Indirect confirmation from associations that fit in with the content of a construction – that give us a 'too' like the one in my story – provides a valuable basis for judging whether the construction is likely to be confirmed in the course of the analysis. It is particularly striking when, by means of a parapraxis, a confirmation of this kind insinuates itself into a direct denial. I once published elsewhere a nice example of this.[1] The name 'Jauner' (a familiar one in Vienna) came up repeatedly in one of my patient's dreams without a sufficient explanation appearing in his associations. I finally put forward the interpretation that when he said 'Jauner' he probably meant 'Gauner' [swindler], whereupon he promptly replied, 'That seems to me too "*jewagt*" [instead of "gewagt" (far-fetched)].'[2] Or there was the other instance, in which, when I suggested to a patient that he considered a particular fee too high, he meant to deny the suggestion with the words 'Ten dollars mean nothing to me' but instead of dollars put in a coin of lower value and said 'ten shillings'.

[1] [See the next footnote.]

[2] [Chapter V of *The Psychopathology of Everyday Life* (1901*b*), *Standard Ed.*, 6, 94. In vulgar speech the 'g' is often pronounced like the German 'j' (English 'y').]

If an analysis is dominated by powerful factors that impose a negative therapeutic reaction,[1] such as a sense of guilt, a masochistic need for suffering or repugnance to receiving help from the analyst, the patient's behaviour after he has been offered a construction often makes it very easy for us to arrive at the decision that we are in search of. If the construction is wrong, there is no change in the patient; but if it is right or gives an approximation to the truth, he reacts to it with an unmistakable aggravation of his symptoms and of his general condition.

We may sum the matter up by asserting that there is no justification for the reproach that we neglect or underestimate the importance of the attitude taken up by those under analysis towards our constructions. We pay attention to them and often derive valuable information from them. But these reactions on the part of the patient are rarely unambiguous and give no opportunity for a final judgement. Only the further course of the analysis enables us to decide whether our constructions are correct or unserviceable. We do not pretend that an individual construction is anything more than a conjecture which awaits examination, confirmation or rejection. We claim no authority for it, we require no direct agreement from the patient, nor do we argue with him if at first he denies it. In short, we conduct ourselves on the model of a familiar figure in one of Nestroy's farces[2]—the manservant who has a single answer on his lips to every question or objection: 'It will all become clear in the course of future developments.'

III

How this occurs in the process of the analysis—the way in which a conjecture of ours is transformed into the patient's conviction—this is hardly worth describing. All of it is familiar to every analyst from his daily experience and is intelligible without difficulty. Only one point requires investigation and explanation. The path that starts from the analyst's construction ought to end in the patient's recollection; but it does not always lead so far. Quite often we do not succeed in bringing the patient to recollect what has been repressed. Instead of that, if

[1] [Cf. Chapter V of *The Ego and the Id* (1923*b*), ibid., **19**, 49.]

[2] [*Der Zerrissene.*]

the analysis is carried out correctly, we produce in him an assured conviction of the truth of the construction which achieves the same therapeutic result as a recaptured memory. The problem of what the circumstances are in which this occurs and of how it is possible that what appears to be an incomplete substitute should nevertheless produce a complete result—all of this is matter for a later enquiry.

I shall conclude this brief paper with a few remarks which open up a wider perspective. I have been struck by the manner in which, in certain analyses, the communication of an obviously apt construction has evoked in the patients a surprising and at first incomprehensible phenomenon. They have had lively recollections called up in them which they themselves have described as 'ultra-clear'[1]—but what they have recollected has not been the event that was the subject of the construction but details relating to that subject. For instance, they have recollected with abnormal sharpness the faces of the people involved in the construction or the rooms in which something of the sort might have happened, or, a step further away, the furniture in such rooms—on the subject of which the construction had naturally no possibility of any knowledge. This has occurred both in dreams immediately after the construction had been put forward and in waking states resembling phantasies. These recollections have themselves led to nothing further and it has seemed plausible to regard them as the product of a compromise. The 'upward drive' of the repressed, stirred into activity by the putting forward of the construction, has striven to carry the important memory-traces into consciousness; but a resistance has succeeded, not, it is true, in *stopping* that movement, but in *displacing* it on to adjacent objects of minor significance.

These recollections might have been described as hallucinations if a belief in their actual presence had been added to their clearness. The importance of this analogy seemed greater when

[1] [The phenomenon here described seems to go back to observations made by Freud in connection with *The Psychopathology of Everyday Life* (1901*b*). See the long footnote, *Standard Ed.*, **4**, 13. The present passage may even be an allusion to a particular episode narrated there, ibid., 2to–7. Cf. also the still earlier papers on 'The Psychical Mechanism of Forgetfulness' (1898*b*), ibid., **3**, 290–1 and footnote, and 297, and on 'Screen Memories' (1899*a*), ibid., **3**, 312–13. In all these passages Freud uses the same word '*uberdeutlich*', translated here 'ultra-clear'.]

I noticed that true hallucinations occasionally occurred in the case of other patients who were certainly not psychotic. My line of thought proceeded as follows: Perhaps it may be a general characteristic of hallucinations to which sufficient attention has not hitherto been paid that in them something that has been experienced in infancy and then forgotten returns—something that the child has seen or heard at a time when he could still hardly speak and that now forces its way into consciousness, probably distorted and displaced owing to the operation of forces that are opposed to this return. And, in view of the close relation between hallucinations and particular forms of psychosis, our line of thought may be carried still further. It may be that the delusions into which these hallucinations are so constantly incorporated may themselves be less independent of the upward drive of the unconscious and the return of the repressed than we usually assume. In the mechanism of a delusion we stress as a rule only two factors, the turning away from the real world and its motive forces on the one hand, and the influence exercised by wish-fulfilment on the content of the delusion on the other. But may it not be that the dynamic process is rather that the turning away from reality is exploited by the upward drive of the repressed in order to force its content into consciousness, while the resistances stirred up by this process and the trend to wish-fulfilment share the responsibility for the distortion and displacement of what is recollected? This is after all the familiar mechanism of dreams, which intuition has equated with madness from time immemorial.

This view of delusions is not, I think, entirely new, but it nevertheless emphasizes a point of view which is not usually brought into the foreground. The essence of it is that there is not only *method* in madness, as the poet has already perceived, but also a fragment of *historical truth*; and it is plausible to suppose that the compulsive belief attaching to delusions derives its strength precisely from infantile sources of this kind. All that I can produce to-day in support of this theory are reminiscences, not fresh impressions. It would probably be worth while to make an attempt to study cases of the disorder in question on the basis of the hypotheses that have been here put forward and also to carry out their treatment on those same lines. The vain effort would be abandoned of convincing

the patient of the error of his delusion and of its contradiction of reality; and, on the contrary, the recognition of its kernel of truth would afford common ground upon which the therapeutic work could develop. That work would consist in liberating the fragment of historical truth from its distortions and its attachments to the actual present day and in leading it back to the point in the past to which it belongs. The transposing of material from a forgotten past on to the present or on to an expectation of the future is indeed a habitual occurrence in neurotics no less than in psychotics. Often enough, when a neurotic is led by an anxiety-state to expect the occurrence of some terrible event, he is in fact merely under the influence of a repressed memory (which is seeking to enter consciousness but cannot become conscious) that something which was at that time terrifying did really happen. I believe that we should gain a great deal of valuable knowledge from work of this kind upon psychotics even if it led to no therapeutic success.

I am aware that it is of small service to handle so important a subject in the cursory fashion that I have here employed. But none the less I have not been able to resist the seduction of an analogy. The delusions of patients appear to me to be the equivalents of the constructions which we build up in the course of an analytic treatment — attempts at explanation and cure, though it is true that these, under the conditions of a psychosis, can do no more than replace the fragment of reality that is being disavowed in the present by another fragment that had already been disavowed in the remote past. It will be the task of each individual investigation to reveal the intimate connections between the material of the present disavowal and that of the original repression. Just as our construction is only effective because it recovers a fragment of lost experience, so the delusion owes its convincing power to the element of historical truth which it inserts in the place of the rejected reality. In this way a proposition which I originally asserted only of hysteria would apply also to delusions — namely, that those who are subject to them are suffering from their own reminiscences.[1] I never intended by this short formula to dispute the complexity of the causation of the illness or to exclude the operation of many other factors.

[1] [Cf. the Breuer and Freud 'Preliminary Communication' (1893a), *Standard Ed.*, 2, 7.]

If we consider mankind as a whole and substitute it for the single human individual, we discover that it too has developed delusions which are inaccessible to logical criticism and which contradict reality. If, in spite of this, they are able to exert an extraordinary power over men, investigation leads us to the same explanation as in the case of the single individual. They owe their power to the element of *historical truth* which they have brought up from the repression of the forgotten and primaeval past.[1]

[1] [The topic of the last few paragraphs ('historical' truth) was very much in Freud's mind at this period, and this was his first long discussion of it. A full list of other references to it will be found in a footnote to the Section of *Moses and Monotheism* (1939*a*) dealing with the same question (p. 130 above).]

SPLITTING OF THE EGO IN THE PROCESS OF DEFENCE
(1940 [1938])

EDITOR'S NOTE

DIE ICHSPALTUNG IM ABWEHRVORGANG

(*a*) GERMAN EDITIONS:

1940 *Int. Z. Psychoanal. Imago*, **25** (3, 4), 241–4.
1941 *G.W.*, **17**, 59–62.

(*b*) ENGLISH TRANSLATION:

'Splitting of the Ego in the Defensive Process'

1941 *Int. J. Psycho-Anal.*, **22** (1), 65–8. (Tr. James Strachey.)
1950 *C.P.*, **5**, 372–5. (Reprint of above.)

The present translation, with a changed title, is a considerably corrected version of that published in 1950.

The manuscript of this important unfinished paper, published posthumously, is dated January 2, 1938, and, according to Ernest Jones (1957, 255), it was 'written at Christmas, 1937'.

The paper carries further than before the investigation of the ego and its behaviour in difficult circumstances. Two interrelated topics are involved, both of which had latterly been occupying Freud's mind: the notion of the act of 'disavowal' ('*Verleugnung*') and the notion of that act's resulting in a 'splitting' of the ego. 'Disavowal' was usually discussed by Freud, as it is here, in connection with the castration complex. It emerged, for instance, in the paper on 'The Infantile Genital Organization' (1923*e*), *Standard Ed.*, **19**, 143, where an Editor's footnote gives a number of references to other appearances of the term. One of these is in the short study of 'Fetishism' (1927*e*), ibid., **21**, 155–6, to which the paper before us may be regarded as a sequel. For in that study the splitting of the ego consequent on disavowal was emphasized. (It had been hinted at already in 'Neurosis and Psychosis' (1924*b*), ibid., **19**, 152–3.)

Though the present paper was, for some unexplained reason, left unfinished by Freud, he took its subject up again a little later, in the last two or three pages of Chapter VIII of his

Outline of Psycho-Analysis (1940*a* [1938]), pp. 201 4 above. He there, however, extends the application of the idea of a splitting of the ego beyond the cases of fetishism and of the psychoses to neuroses in general. Thus the topic links up with the wider question of the 'alteration of the ego' which is invariably brought about by the processes of defence. This, again, was something with which Freud had dealt recently—in his technical paper on 'Analysis Terminable and Interminable' (1937*c*, especially in Section V)—but which leads us back to very early times, to the second paper on the neuro-psychoses of defence (1896*b*), *Standard Ed.*, **3**, 185, and to the even earlier Draft K of the Fliess correspondence (1950*a*).

SPLITTING OF THE EGO IN THE PROCESS OF DEFENCE

I FIND myself for a moment in the interesting position of not knowing whether what I have to say should be regarded as something long familiar and obvious or as something entirely new and puzzling. But I am inclined to think the latter.

I have at last been struck by the fact that the ego of a person whom we know as a patient in analysis must, dozens of years earlier, when it was young, have behaved in a remarkable manner in certain particular situations of pressure. We can assign in general and somewhat vague terms the conditions under which this comes about, by saying that it occurs under the influence of a psychical trauma. I prefer to select a single sharply defined special case, though it certainly does not cover all the possible modes of causation.

Let us suppose, then, that a child's ego is under the sway of a powerful instinctual demand which it is accustomed to satisfy and that it is suddenly frightened by an experience which teaches it that the continuance of this satisfaction will result in an almost intolerable real danger. It must now decide either to recognize the real danger, give way to it and renounce the instinctual satisfaction, or to disavow reality and make itself believe that there is no reason for fear, so that it may be able to retain the satisfaction. Thus there is a conflict between the demand by the instinct and the prohibition by reality. But in fact the child takes neither course, or rather he takes both simultaneously, which comes to the same thing. He replies to the conflict with two contrary reactions, both of which are valid and effective. On the one hand, with the help of certain mechanisms he rejects reality and refuses to accept any prohibition, on the other hand, in the same breath he recognizes the danger of reality, takes over the fear of that danger as a pathological symptom and tries subsequently to divest himself of the fear. It must be confessed that this is a very ingenious solution of the difficulty. Both of the parties to the dispute obtain their share: the instinct is allowed to retain its satisfaction and proper respect is shown to reality. But everything has to be paid

for in one way or another, and this success is achieved at the price of a rift in the ego which never heals but which increases as time goes on. The two contrary reactions to the conflict persist as the centre-point of a splitting of the ego. The whole process seems so strange to us because we take for granted the synthetic nature of the processes of the ego.[1] But we are clearly at fault in this. The synthetic function of the ego, though it is of such extraordinary importance, is subject to particular conditions and is liable to a whole number of disturbances.

It will assist if I introduce an individual case history into this schematic disquisition. A little boy, while he was between three and four years of age, had become acquainted with the female genitals through being seduced by an older girl. After these relations had been broken off, he carried on the sexual stimulation set going in this way by zealously practising manual masturbation, but he was soon caught at it by his energetic nurse and was threatened with castration, the carrying out of which was, as usual, ascribed to his father. There were thus present in this case conditions calculated to produce a tremendous effect of fright. A threat of castration by itself need not produce a great impression. A child will refuse to believe in it, for he cannot easily imagine the possibility of losing such a highly prized part of his body. His [earlier] sight of the female genitals might have convinced our child of that possibility. But he drew no such conclusion from it, since his disinclination to doing so was too great and there was no motive present which could compel him to. On the contrary, whatever uneasiness he may have felt was calmed by the reflection that what was missing would yet make its appearance: she would grow one a penis later. Anyone who has observed enough small boys will be able to recollect having come across some such remark at the sight of a baby sister's genitals. But it is different if both factors are present together. In that case the threat revives the memory of the perception which had hitherto been regarded as harmless and finds in that memory a dreaded confirmation. The little boy now thinks he understands why the girl's genitals showed no sign of a penis and no longer ventures to doubt that his own

[1] [See, for instance, a passage in Lecture XXXI of the *New Introductory Lectures* (1933*a*), *Standard Ed.*, **22**, 70, and an Editor's footnote there, which gives a number of other references.]

genitals may meet with the same fate. Thence forward he cannot help believing in the reality of the danger of castration.

The usual result of the fright of castration, the result that passes as the normal one, is that, either immediately or after some considerable struggle, the boy gives way to the threat and obeys the prohibition either wholly or at least in part (that is, by no longer touching his genitals with his hand). In other words, he gives up, in whole or in part, the satisfaction of the instinct. We are prepared to hear, however, that our present patient found another way out. He created a substitute for the penis which he missed in females—that is to say, a fetish. In so doing, it is true that he had disavowed reality, but he had saved his own penis. So long as he was not obliged to acknowledge that females have lost their penis, there was no need for him to believe the threat that had been made against him: he need have no fears for his own penis, so he could proceed with his masturbation undisturbed. This behaviour on the part of our patient strikes us forcibly as being a turning away from reality—a procedure which we should prefer to reserve for psychoses. And it is in fact not very different. Yet we will suspend our judgement, for upon closer inspection we shall discover a not unimportant distinction. The boy did not simply contradict his perceptions and hallucinate a penis where there was none to be seen; he effected no more than a displacement of value—he transferred the importance of the penis to another part of the body, a procedure in which he was assisted by the mechanism of regression—in a manner which need not here be explained. This displacement, it is true, related only to the female body; as regards his own penis nothing was changed.

This way of dealing with reality, which almost deserves to be described as artful, was decisive as regards the boy's practical behaviour. He continued with his masturbation as though it implied no danger to his penis, but at the same time, in complete contradiction to his apparent boldness or indifference, he developed a symptom which showed that he nevertheless did recognize the danger. He had been threatened with being castrated by his father, and immediately afterwards, simultaneously with the creation of his fetish, he developed an intense fear of his father punishing him, which it required the whole force of his masculinity to master and overcompensate. This fear of his father, too, was silent on the subject of castration: by the

help of regression to an oral phase, it assumed the form of a fear of being eaten by his father. At this point it is impossible to forget a primitive fragment of Greek mythology which tells how Kronos, the old Father God, swallowed his children and sought to swallow his youngest son Zeus like the rest, and how Zeus was saved by the craft of his mother and later on castrated his father. But we must return to our case history and add that the boy produced yet another symptom, though it was a slight one, which he has retained to this day. This was an anxious susceptibility against either of his little toes being touched, as though, in all the to and fro between disavowal and acknowledgement, it was nevertheless castration that found the clearer expression. . . .

* * * * *

SOME ELEMENTARY LESSONS IN PSYCHO-ANALYSIS
(1940 [1938])

(*a*) GERMAN EDITIONS:

1940 *Int. Z. Psychoanal. Imago*, **25** (1), 21–2. (In part.)
1941 *G.W.*, **17**, 141–7. (Complete.)

(*b*) ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS:

1940 *Int. J. Psychoanal.*, **21** (1), (83–4. In part.) (Tr. James Strachey.)
1950 *C.P.*, **5**, 376–82. (Complete. Same translator.)

The present translation is a revised reprint of that published in 1950. The original part-publications were as a footnote to the first German issue of the *Outline of Psycho-Analysis* (1940*a* [1938]) and as an Appendix to the first English translation of that work.

The title of the original is in English. It was written in London, and the manuscript is dated October 20, 1938. But it remained a fragment. The *Outline* had been dropped early in the previous September—also a fragment, but a very much larger and more important one—and this was a new and different approach to the same problem. Cf. a fuller discussion in the Editor's Note to the *Outline*, p. 142 above.

SOME ELEMENTARY LESSONS IN PSYCHO-ANALYSIS

An author who sets out to introduce some branch of knowledge —or, to put it more modestly, some branch of research—to an uninstructed public must clearly make his choice between two methods or techniques.

It is possible to start off from what every reader knows (or thinks he knows) and regards as self-evident, without in the first instance contradicting him. An opportunity will soon occur for drawing his attention to facts in the same field, which, though they are known to him, he has so far neglected or insufficiently appreciated. Beginning from these, one can introduce further facts to him of which he has *no* knowledge and so prepare him for the necessity of going beyond his earlier judgements, of seeking new points of view and of taking new hypotheses into consideration. In this way one can get him to take a part in building up a new theory about the subject and one can deal with his objections to it during the actual course of the joint work. A method of this kind might well be called *genetic*. It follows the path along which the investigator himself has travelled earlier. In spite of all its advantages, it has the defect of not making a sufficiently striking effect upon the learner. He will not be nearly so much impressed by something which he has watched coming into existence and passing through a slow and difficult period of growth as he would be by something that is presented to him ready-made as an apparently self-contained whole.

It is precisely this last effect which is produced by the alternative method of presentation. This other method, the *dogmatic* one, begins straight away by stating its conclusions. Its premisses make demands upon the audience's attention and belief and very little is adduced in support of them. And there is then a danger that a critical hearer may shake his head and say: 'All this sounds most peculiar: where does the fellow get it from?'

In what follows I shall not rely exclusively upon either of the two methods of presentation: I shall make use now of one and now of the other. I am under no delusion about the difficulty of

my task. Psycho-analysis has little prospect of becoming liked or popular. It is not merely that much of what it has to say offends people's feelings. Almost as much difficulty is created by the fact that our science involves a number of hypotheses—it is hard to say whether they should be regarded as postulates[1] or as products of our researches—which are bound to seem very strange to ordinary modes of thought and which fundamentally contradict current views. But there is no help for it. We must begin our brief study with two of these hazardous hypotheses.

The Nature of the Psychical

Psycho-analysis is a part of the mental science of psychology. It is also described as 'depth psychology'—we shall later discover why. If someone asks what 'the psychical' really means, it is easy to reply by enumerating its constituents: our perceptions, ideas, memories, feelings and acts of volition—all these form part of what is psychical. But if the questioner goes further and asks whether there is not some common quality possessed by all these processes which makes it possible to get nearer to the *nature*, or, as people sometimes say, the *essence* of the psychical, then it is harder to give an answer.

If an analogous question had been put to a physicist (as to the nature of electricity, for instance), his reply, until quite recently, would have been: 'For the purpose of explaining certain phenomena, we assume the existence of electrical forces which are present in things and which emanate from them. We study these phenomena, discover the laws that govern them and even put them to practical use. This satisfies us provisionally. We do not know the *nature* of electricity. Perhaps we may discover it later, as our work goes on. It must be admitted that what we are ignorant of is precisely the most important and interesting part of the whole business, but for the moment that does not worry us. It is simply how things happen in the natural sciences.'

Psychology, too, is a natural science. What else can it be? But its case is different. Not everyone is bold enough to make judgements about physical matters; but everyone—the philosopher and the man in the street alike—has his opinion on psycho-

[1] [In the only German edition in which this passage appears, this word, '*Voraussetzungen*', is inexplicably misprinted '*Moralbesetzungen*' '(moral cathexes').]

logical questions and behaves as if he were at least an *amateur* psychologist. And now comes the remarkable thing. Everyone — or almost everyone — was agreed that what is psychical really *has* a common quality in which its essence is expressed: namely the quality of *being conscious* — unique, indescribable, but needing no description. All that is conscious, they said, is psychical, and conversely all that is psychical is conscious: that is self-evident and to contradict it is nonsense. It cannot be said that this decision threw much light upon the nature of the psychical, for consciousness is one of the fundamental facts of our life and our researches come up against it like a blank wall and can find no path beyond it. Moreover the equation of what is mental with what is conscious had the unwelcome result of divorcing psychical processes from the general context of events in the universe and of setting them in complete contrast to all others. But this would not do, since the fact could not long be overlooked that psychical phenomena are to a high degree dependent upon somatic influences and on their side have the most powerful effects upon somatic processes. If ever human thought found itself in an *impasse* it was here. To find a way out, the philosophers at least were obliged to assume that there were organic processes parallel to the conscious psychical ones, related to them in a manner that was hard to explain, which acted as intermediaries in the reciprocal relations between 'body and mind', and which served to re-insert the psychical into the texture of life. But this solution remained unsatisfactory.

Psycho-analysis escaped such difficulties as these by energetically denying the equation between what is psychical and what is conscious. No; being conscious cannot be the essence of what is psychical. It is only a *quality* of what is psychical, and an inconstant quality at that — one that is far oftener absent than present. The psychical, whatever its nature may be, is in itself unconscious and probably similar in kind to all the other natural processes of which we have obtained knowledge.

Psycho-analysis bases this assertion on a number of facts, of which I shall now proceed to give a selection.

We know what is meant by ideas 'occurring' to one — thoughts that suddenly come into consciousness without one's being aware of the steps that led up to them, though they, too, must have been psychical acts. It can even happen that one arrives in this way at the solution of some difficult intellectual problem

which has previously for a time baffled one's efforts. All the complicated processes of selection, rejection and decision which occupied the interval were withdrawn from consciousness. We shall not be putting forward any new theory in saying that they were unconscious and perhaps, too, remained so.

In the second place, I shall pick a single instance to represent an immensely large class of phenomena.[1] The President of a public body (the Lower House of the Austrian Parliament) on one occasion opened a sitting with the following words: 'I take notice that a full quorum of members is present and herewith declare the sitting *closed*.' It was a slip of the tongue—for there can be no doubt that what the President intended to say was 'opened'. Why, then, did he say the opposite? We shall expect to be told it was an accidental mistake, a failure in carrying out an intention such as may easily happen for various reasons: it had no meaning and in any case contraries are particularly easily substituted for each other. If, however, we bear in mind the situation in which the slip of the tongue occurred, we shall be inclined to prefer another explanation. Many of the previous sittings of the House had been disagreeably stormy and had accomplished nothing, so that it would be only too natural for the President to think at the moment of making his opening statement: 'If only the sitting that's just beginning were finished! I would much rather be closing then opening it!' When he began to speak he was probably not aware of this wish – it was not conscious to him – but it was certainly present and it succeeded in making itself effective, against the speaker's will, in his apparent mistake. A single instance can scarcely enable us to decide between two such different explanations. But what if every other instance of a slip of the tongue could be explained in the same way, and similarly every slip of the pen, every case of mis-reading or mis-hearing, and every faulty action? What if in all those instances (one might actually say, without a single exception) it was possible to demonstrate the presence of a psychical act – a thought, a wish or an intention—which would account for the apparent mistake and which was unconscious at the moment at which it became effective, even though it may have been conscious previously? If that were so, it would really no longer be possible to dispute the fact that psychical acts

[1] Cf. *The Psychopathology of Everyday Life* [1901*b*, Chapter V, *Standard Ed.*, 6, 59–60.]

which are unconscious do exist and that they are even sometimes active while they are unconscious and that in that case they can even sometimes get the better of conscious intentions. The person concerned in a mistake of this kind can react to it in various ways. He may overlook it completely or he may notice it himself and become embarrassed and ashamed. He cannot as a rule find the explanation of it himself without outside help; and he often refuses to accept the solution when it is put before him – for a time, at all events.

In the third place, finally, it is possible in the case of persons in a state of hypnosis to prove experimentally that there are such things as unconscious psychical acts and that consciousness is not an indispensable condition of [psychical] activity. Anyone who has witnessed such an experiment will receive an unforgettable impression and a conviction that can never be shaken. Here is more or less what happens. The doctor enters the hospital ward, puts his umbrella in the corner, hypnotizes one of the patients and says to him: 'I'm going out now. When I come in again, you will come to meet me with my umbrella open and hold it over my head.' The doctor and his assistants then leave the ward. As soon as they come back, the patient, who is no longer under hypnosis, carries out exactly the instructions that were given him while he was hypnotized. The doctor questions him: 'What's this you're doing? What's the meaning of all this?' The patient is clearly embarrassed. He makes some lame remark such as 'I only thought, doctor, as it's raining outside you'd open your umbrella in the room before you went out.' The explanation is obviously quite inadequate and made up on the spur of the moment to offer some sort of motive for his senseless behaviour. It is clear to us spectators that he is in ignorance of his real motive. We, however, know what it is, for we were present when the suggestion was made to him which he is now carrying out, while he himself knows nothing of the fact that it is at work in him.[1]

The question of the relation of the conscious to the psychical may now be regarded as settled: consciousness is only a *quality* or

[1] I am describing experiments made by Bernheim at Nancy in 1889 at which I myself assisted. In these days there is no need for me to discuss any doubts as to the genuineness of hypnotic phenomena of this kind. [Cf. Freud's fuller account of his visit to Nancy in Chapter I of his *Autobiographical Study* (1925*d*), *Standard Ed.*, **20**, 17–18.]

attribute of what is psychical, and moreover an inconstant one. But there is one further objection with which we have to deal. We are told that, in spite of the facts that have been mentioned, there is no necessity to abandon the identity between what is conscious and what is psychical: the so-called unconscious psychical processes are the organic processes which have long been recognized as running parallel to the mental ones. This, of course, would reduce our problem to an apparently indifferent matter of definition. Our reply is that it would be unjustifiable and inexpedient to make a breach in the unity of mental life for the sake of propping up a definition, since it is clear in any case that consciousness can only offer us an incomplete and broken chain of phenomena. And it can scarcely be a matter of chance that it was not until the change had been made in the definition of the psychical that it became possible to construct a comprehensive and coherent theory of mental life.

Nor need it be supposed that this alternative view of the psychical is an innovation due to psycho-analysis. A German philosopher, Theodor Lipps,[1] asserted with the greatest explicitness that the psychical is in itself unconscious and that the unconscious is the truly psychical. The concept of the unconscious has long been knocking at the gates of psychology and asking to be let in. Philosophy and literature have often toyed with it, but science could find no use for it. Psycho-analysis has seized upon the concept, has taken it seriously and has given it a fresh content. By its researches it has led to a knowledge of characteristics of the unconscious psychical which have hitherto been unsuspected, and it has discovered some of the laws which govern it. But none of this implies that the quality of being conscious has lost its importance for us. It remains the one light which illuminates our path and leads us through the darkness of mental life. In consequence of the special character of our discoveries, our scientific work in psychology will consist in translating unconscious processes into conscious ones, and thus filling in the gaps in conscious perception. . . .

* * * * *

[1] [1851–1914. Professor of Philosophy at Munich. Some notes on Freud's relation to his writings will be found in the Editor's Preface to his book on jokes (1905*c*), *Standard Ed.*, 8, 4–5.]

A COMMENT ON ANTI-SEMITISM
(1938)

EDITOR'S NOTE

EIN WORT ZUM ANTISEMITISMUS

(*a*) GERMAN EDITION:

1938 *Die Zukunft: ein neues Deutschland ein neues Europa*, No. 7, 2. (November 25.)

(*b*) ENGLISH TRANSLATION:

'On Antisemitism'

1938 As above. (Tr. unspecified.)

The present translation is by James Strachey.

Some particulars of the periodical in which this appeared have been given by Arthur Koestler (1954, 406 ff.), who was editing it at the time we are concerned with. It was published in Paris, and he described it as 'a German *émigré* weekly'. It started publication in the autumn of 1938 and ceased some eighteen months later. Mr. Koestler was in charge of it for the first few months of its existence. The particular issue in which Freud's article appeared was an 'Anglo-German' one, printed in both languages, and Mr. Koestler relates that he came to London to persuade Freud to contribute to it. The periodical is now difficult to obtain, and we are much indebted to Dr. K. R. Eissler, of the Sigmund Freud Archives, for providing us with photostats of Freud's original manuscript, of the printed article and of the contemporary, anonymous, and very free, translation.

This article, it will be seen, consists almost wholly of a quotation from a source which Freud declares that he can no longer trace. It has been suggested, with some plausibility (cf. Ernest Jones, 1957, 256), that the quotation is in fact by Freud himself, who chose an indirect manner of expressing some rather uncongenial views. There is in any case a strong kinship between much of what is contained here and opinions put forward by Freud elsewhere, particularly in *Moses and Monotheism* (1939*a*), which

he had only recently completed. (See, for instance, the discussions of the Jewish character in Part I (D) and Part II (A) of the third essay.) And again, the plea, made so forcibly here, that protests against the persecution of the Jews should be made by *non-Jews* appears as well in Freud's letter to *Time and Tide* (1938*c*), published only a day later than the present article (p. 301 below).

A COMMENT ON ANTI-SEMITISM

In the course of examining the remarks in the press and in literature provoked by the recent persecutions of the Jews, I came upon one essay which struck me as so unusual that I made a *précis* of it for my own use. What its author wrote was approximately as follows:

'By way of preface I must explain that I am not a Jew and therefore I am not driven into making these observations by any egoistic concern. Yet I have felt a lively interest in the anti-semitic excesses of to-day and have directed my particular attention to the protests against them. These protests come from two directions—ecclesiastical and secular—the former in the name of religion, the latter appealing to the claims of humanity. The former were scanty and came late; but they *did* come in the end, and even His Holiness the Pope raised his voice. I confess that there was something I missed in the demonstrations coming from *both* sides—something at their beginning and something else at their end. I will try now to supply it.

'All these protests, I think, might be preceded by a particular introduction, which would run: "Well, it's true, *I* don't like Jews either. In some sort of way they seem strange to me and antipathetic. They have many disagreeable qualities and great defects. I think, too, that the influence they have had on us and our affairs has been predominantly detrimental. Their race, compared with our own, is obviously an inferior one; all their activities argue in favour of that." And after this what these protests do in fact contain could follow *without any discrepancy*: "But we profess a religion of love. We ought to love even our enemies as ourselves. We know that the Son of God gave His life on earth to redeem *all* men from the burden of sin. He is our model, and it is therefore sinning against His intention and against the command of the Christian religion if we consent to Jews being insulted, ill-treated, robbed and plunged into misery. We ought to protest against this, irrespectively of how much or how little the Jews deserve such treatment." The

secular writers who believe in the gospel of humanity, protest in similar terms.

'I confess that I have not been satisfied by any of these demonstrations. Apart from the religion of love and humanity there is also a religion of truth, and it has come off badly in these protests. But the truth is that for long centuries we have treated the Jewish people unjustly and that we are continuing to do so by judging them unjustly. Any one of us who does not start by admitting our guilt has not done his duty in this. The Jews are not worse than we are; they have somewhat other characteristics and somewhat other faults, but on the whole we have no right to look down on them. In some respects, indeed, they are our superiors. They do not need so much alcohol as we do in order to make life tolerable; crimes of brutality, murder, robbery and sexual violence are great rarities among them; they have always set a high value on intellectual achievement and interests; their family life is more intimate; they take better care of the poor, charity is a sacred duty to them. Nor can we call them in any sense inferior. Since we have allowed them to co-operate in our cultural tasks, they have acquired merit by valuable contributions in all the spheres of science, art and technology, and they have richly repaid our tolerance. So let us cease at last to hand them out favours when they have a claim to justice.'

It was natural that such determined partisanship from someone who was not a Jew should have made a deep impression on me. But now I have a remarkable confession to make. I am a very old man and my memory is no more what it was. I can no longer recall where I read the essay of which I made the *précis* nor who it was who was its author. Perhaps one of the readers of this periodical will be able to come to my help?

A whisper has just reached my ears that what I probably had in mind was Count Heinrich Coudenhove-Kalergi's book *Das Wesen des Antisemitismus* [The Essence of Anti-Semitism], which contains precisely what the author I am in search of missed in the recent protests, and more besides. I know that book. It appeared first in 1901 and was re-issued by his son [Count Richard Coudenhove-Kalergi] in 1929 with an admirable introduction. But it cannot be that. What I am thinking of is a shorter pronouncement and one of very recent date. Or am I

altogether at fault? Does nothing of the kind exist? And has the work of the two Coudenhoves had no influence on our contemporaries?[1]

Sigm. Freud

[1] [A later work by the younger Coudenhove in favour of the Pan-European movement appeared in an English translation in 1953 with a preface by Sir Winston Churchill.]

SHORTER WRITINGS
(1937–1938)

LOU ANDREAS-SALOMÉ[1]

(1937)

On February 5 of this year Frau Lou Andreas-Salomé died peacefully in her little house at Gottingen, almost 76 years of age. For the last 25 years of her life this remarkable woman was attached to psycho-analysis, to which she contributed valuable writings and which she practised as well. I am not saying too much if I acknowledge that we all felt it as an honour when she joined the ranks of our collaborators and comrades in arms, and at the same time as a fresh guarantee of the truth of the theories of analysis.

It was known that as a girl she had kept up an intense friendship with Friedrich Nietzsche, founded upon her deep understanding of the philosopher's bold ideas. This relationship came to an abrupt end when she refused the proposal of marriage which he made her. It was well known, too, that many years later she had acted alike as Muse and protecting mother to Rainer Maria Rilke, the great poet, who was a little helpless in facing life. But beyond this her personality remained obscure. Her modesty and discretion were more than ordinary. She never spoke of her own poetical and literary works. She clearly knew where the true values in life are to be looked for. Those who were closer to her had the strongest impression of the genuineness and harmony of her nature and could discover with astonishment that all feminine frailties, and perhaps most human frailties, were foreign to her or had been conquered by her in the course of her life.

It was in Vienna that long ago the most moving episode of her feminine fortunes had been played out. In 1912 she returned to Vienna in order to be initiated into psycho-analysis. My

[1] [*Int. Z. Psychoanal.*, **23** (1) (1937), 5; *G.W.*, **16** (1950), 270. The present translation, apparently the first into English, is by James Strachey. Lou Andreas-Salomé was born in St Petersburg in 1861. Her husband (Friedrich Carl Andreas, 1846–1930) was Professor of Oriental Languages at Gottingen. He married Lou von Salomé in 1887. A number of Freud's letters to her are included in the volume of his correspondence edited by Ernst Freud (1960*a*).]

daughter, who was her close friend, once heard her regret that she had not known psycho-analysis in her youth. But, after all, in those days there was no such thing.

Sigm. Freud

February, 1937.

FINDINGS, IDEAS, PROBLEMS[1]
(1941 [1938])

London, June.

June 16.—It is interesting that in connection with early experiences, as contrasted with later experiences, all the various reactions to them survive, of course including contradictory ones. Instead of a decision, which would have been the outcome later. Explanation: weakness of the power of synthesis, retention of the characteristic of the primary processes.

July 12.—As a substitute for penis-envy, identification with the clitoris: neatest expression of inferiority, source of all inhibitions. At the same time [in Case X] disavowal of the discovery that other women too are without a penis.

'Having' and 'being' in children. Children like expressing an object-relation by an identification: 'I am the object.' 'Having' is the later of the two; after loss of the object it relapses into 'being'. Example: the breast. 'The breast is a part of me, I am the breast.' Only later: 'I have it' that is, 'I am not it' . . .

July 12.—With neurotics it is as though we were in a prehistoric landscape—for instance, in the Jurassic. The great saurians are still running about; the horsetails grow as high as palms (?).

July 20.—The hypothesis of there being inherited vestiges in the id alters, so to say, our views about it.

July 20.—The individual perishes from his internal conflicts, the species perishes in its struggle with the external world to which it is no longer adapted.—This deserves to be included in *Moses*.

[1] [These short disconnected paragraphs were printed at the end of the volume of posthumous works published in 1941 (*G W*, **17**, 149–52) under the heading 'Ergebnisse, Ideen, Probleme. London Juni 1938'. This heading is Freud's, except for the date of the year. These notes together with two others omitted by the German editors, occupy two sides of a single sheet of paper.]

August 3.—A sense of guilt also originates from unsatisfied love. Like hate. In fact we have been obliged to derive every conceivable thing from that material: like economically self-sufficient States with their '*Ersatz* [substitute] products'.

August 3. -The ultimate ground of all intellectual inhibitions and all inhibitions of work seems to be the inhibition of masturbation in childhood. But perhaps it goes deeper; perhaps it is not its inhibition by external influences but its unsatisfying nature in itself. There is always something lacking for complete discharge and satisfaction—en attendant toujours quelquechose qui ne venait point[1]—and this missing part, the reaction of orgasm, manifests itself in equivalents in other spheres, in *absences*, outbreaks of laughing, weeping [Xy], and perhaps other ways. -Once again infantile sexuality has fixed a model in this.

August 22. Space may be the projection of the extension of the psychical apparatus. No other derivation is probable. Instead of Kant's *a priori* determinants of our psychical apparatus. Psyche is extended; knows nothing about it.

August 22.—Mysticism is the obscure self-perception of the realm outside the ego, of the id.

[1] ['Always waiting for something which never came.']

ANTI-SEMITISM IN ENGLAND[1]
(1938)

20 Maresfield Gardens
London, N.W.3.
16.11.1938.

To the Editor of *Time and Tide.*

I came to Vienna as a child of 4 years from a small town in Moravia. After 78 years of assiduous work I had to leave my home, saw the Scientific Society I had founded, dissolved, our institutions destroyed, our Printing Press ('Verlag') taken over by the invaders, the books I had published confiscated or reduced to pulp, my children expelled from their professions. Don't you think you ought to reserve the columns of your special number for the utterances of non-Jewish people, less personally involved than myself?

In this connection my mind gets hold of an old French saying:

> Le bruit est pour le fat
> La plainte est pour le sot;
> L'honnête homme trompé
> S'en va et ne dit mot.[2]

I feel deeply affected by the passage in your letter acknowledging 'a certain growth of anti-semitism even in this country'. Ought this present persecution not rather give rise to a wave of sympathy in this country?

Respectfully yours
Sigm. Freud.

[1] [This letter was written by Freud in English. It was written, as will be gathered from its content, in response to a request from the editor of *Time and Tide* (Lady Rhondda) for a contribution to a special number on anti-semitism. The letter was published in that paper on November 26, 1938 (p. 1649), under the heading 'A Letter from Freud'. It was included in the collection of Freud's letters made by Ernst Freud (Freud, 1960*a*).]

[2] ['A fuss becomes the Fop
A Fool's complaints are heard;
A Gentleman betrayed
Departs without a word.'
From the eighteenth-century play, *La Coquette Corrigée* by Jean Sauvé de la Noue (1701–1761)—Act I, Scene 3.]

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[Titles of books and periodicals are in italics; titles of papers are in inverted commas. Abbreviations are in accordance with the *World List of Scientific Periodicals* (London, 1952). Further abbreviations used in this volume will be found in the List at the end of this bibliography. Numerals in thick type refer to volumes, ordinary numerals refer to pages. The figures in round brackets at the end of each entry indicate the page or pages of this volume on which the work in question is mentioned. In the case of the Freud entries, the letters attached to the dates of publication are in accordance with the corresponding entries in the complete bibliography of Freud's writings to be included in the last volume of the *Standard Edition*.

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[*Trans.*: 'On the Psychical Mechanism of Hysterical Phenomena: Preliminary Communication', *C.P.*, **1**, 24, *Standard Ed.*, **2**, 3.]
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[*Trans.*: 'Instincts and their Vicissitudes', *C.P.*, **4**, 60, *Standard Ed.*, **14**, 111.]

(1915*d*) 'Die Verdrängung', *G.S.*, **5**, 466; *G.W.*, **10**, 248. (227)
[*Trans.*: 'Repression', *C.P.*, **4**, 84; *Standard Ed.*, **14**, 143.]

(1915*e*) 'Das Unbewusste', *G.S.*, **5**, 480; *G.W.*, **10**, 264. (97, 143, 160)
[*Trans.*: 'The Unconscious', *C.P.*, **4**, 98, *Standard Ed.*, **14**, 161.]

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[*Trans.*: 'The Psychogenesis of a Case of Female Homosexuality', *C.P.*, **2**, 202; *Standard Ed.*, **18**, 147.]

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(1922*b*) 'Über einige neurotische Mechanismen bei Eifersucht, Paranoia und Homosexualität', *G.S.*, **5**, 387; *G.W.*, **13**, 195. (130, 202)
[*Trans.*: 'Some Neurotic Mechanisms in Jealousy, Paranoia and Homosexuality', *C.P.*, **2**, 232; *Standard Ed.*, **18**, 223.]

(1923*b*) *Das Ich und das Es*, Vienna. *G.S.*, **6**, 353, *G.W.*, **13**, 237. (78, 95, 97, 102, 143, 151, 153, 243, 265)
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(1923*c*) 'Bemerkungen zur Theorie und Praxis der Traumdeutung', *G.S.*, **3**, 305; *G.W.*, **13**, 301. (262)
[*Trans.*: 'Remarks on the Theory and Practice of Dream-Interpretation', *C.P.*, **5**, 136; *Standard Ed.*, **19**, 109.]

(1923*e*) 'Die infantile Genitalorganisation', *G.S.*, **5**, 232; *G.W.*, **13**, 293. (273)
[*Trans.*: 'The Infantile Genital Organization', *C.P.*, **2**, 244; *Standard Ed.*, **19**, 141.]

(1923*f*) 'Josef Popper-Lynkeus und die Theorie des Traumes', *G.S.*, **11**, 295; *G.W.*, **13**, 357. (245)
[*Trans.*: 'Josef Popper-Lynkeus and the Theory of Dreams', *Standard Ed.*, **19**, 261.]

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(1924*b*, 'Neurose und Psychose', *G.S.*, **5**, 418, *G.W.*, **13**, 387. (273)
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(1924*c*, 'Das ökonomische Problem des Masochismus', *G.S.*, **5**, 374; *G.W.*, **13**, 371. (225)
[*Trans.*: 'The Economic Problem of Masochism', *C.P.*, **2**, 255; *Standard Ed.*, **19**, 157.]

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[*Trans.*: 'Fetishism', *C.P.*, **5**, 198, *Standard Ed.*, **21**, 149.]

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[*Trans.*: Address delivered in the Goethe House at Frankfort, *Standard Ed.*, **21**, 208.]

(1931*b*) 'Über die weibliche Sexualität', *G.S.*, **12**, 120, *G.W.*, **14**, 517. (168, 194, 251)
[*Trans.*: 'Female Sexuality', *C.P.*, **5**, 252, *Standard Ed.*, **21**, 223.]

(1932*a*) 'Zur Gewinnung des Feuers', *G.S.*, **12**, 141, *G.W.*, **16**, 3. (130)
[*Trans.*: 'The Acquisition and Control of Fire', *C.P.*, **5**, 288, *Standard Ed.*, **22**, 185.]

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[*Trans.* 'Splitting of the Ego in the Process of Defence', *C P*, **5**, 372; *Standard Ed.*, **23**, 273.]
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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

G.S. = Freud, *Gesammelte Schriften* (12 vols.), Vienna, 1924–34

G.W. = Freud, *Gesammelte Werke*, (18 vols.), London, from 1940

C.P. = Freud, *Collected Papers* (5 vols.), London, 1924–50

S.E.
Standard Ed. } = Freud, *Standard Edition* (24 vols.), London, from 1953

Almanach 1938 = *Almanach der Psychoanalyse 1938*, Vienna, Internationaler Psychoanalytischer Verlag, 1937

GENERAL INDEX

This index includes the names of non-technical authors. It also includes the names of technical authors where no reference is made in the text to specific works. For references to specific technical works, the Bibliography should be consulted.—The compilation of the index was undertaken by Mrs. R. S. Partridge.

Aaron, 15 *n.*, 33
Abraham, 26, 44–5
Absences, 300
Acquired characters, inheritance of, 100, 102 *n.*, 132, 240–1
Acting out instead of remembering, 89
Active and passive (*see also* Passive sexual attitude), 188
Adler, A., 250
Adonai, 25, 39, 40
Adonis, 25
Aeschylus, 114
Affect, 67, 157, 225 *n.* 1, 257–8
After-repression, 227
Agamemnon, 114 *n.* 1
Aggressiveness, 74, 79–80, 116, 118, 149–50, 154, 244
Agrigentum, 245 *n.* 2
Ahmose, 9
Akhenaten, 6, 20–4, 26, 28–9, 31–2, 47, 50, 59, 60, 63–4, 88, 110, 136
Akhetaten, 23–4
Akhnaton (see *Akhenaten*)
Akki, 11
Alexander the Great, 71
Allah, 92
Amarna (*see* Tell el-'Amarna)
Ambivalence
  of relation to father, 82–3, 87, 121, 131, 134, 136, 176
  of transference, 175–7
Amenophis III, 21, 23
Amenophis IV (see also *Akhenaten*), 20–3, 59
Amen-Rē', 19
Amentia, 202 *n.* 1
American prosperity and psychoanalysis, 216–17
Amnesia, infantile, 74–5, 153, 186, 191, 258–60
Amphion, 11
Amun, 21–3, 25, 88
Anal erotism (*see* Sadistic-anal phase)
Analogies
  amoeba and pseudopodia, 150–1
  archaeological excavation, 259–60
  brackets in algebra, 31 and *n.*
  bronze statue with feet of clay, 17
  building a house, 260
  censorship of books, 236–7
  civil war, 173
  dams against flood, 226–7
  dancer balancing on tip-toe, 58
  economically self-sufficient states, 300
  fire-brigade and oil-lamp, 216–17
  Galton's composite photographs, 10
  governors of conquered country, 167
  immunization from scarlet-fever, 232
  jigsaw puzzle, 17
  Jurassic landscape, 299
  key fossil, 39
  'Made in Germany', 199
  mausoleums, 62
  microscope, use of, 197
  N.C.O. reprimanded by superior officer, 168 *n.* 2
  nightwatchman, 171
  photographic negative, 126
  prick of needle during cell-division, 185
  primitive races who have had Christianity thrust upon them, 234
  sculptor in stone or clay, 241
  sleeping dogs, 231
  state within a state, 76
  sutures after an operation, 218
  walking in unknown country with bad legs, 237
  X-ray, 249

Anat-Yahu, 63
Andreas, F. C., 297 *n.*
Andreas-Salomé, Lou, 297–8
Animal (*see also* Totem animal)
  ancestry of human beings, 75, 186
  gods, 19, 83, 133
  phobias, 82, 84
Animals
  compared to human beings, 97, 100, 132–3, 147, 153 *n.*, 162
  Egyptian attitude to, 30 *n.* 2
  instinct in, 100, 133
  of the Evangelists, 85
Anticathexes, 94–5, 165–6, 172, 178, 213
Anti-semitism (*see* Jews, persecution of)
Antithetical meaning of primal words, 169
Anxiety (*see also* Fear; Phobias), 183, 198, 219, 235, 278
  as danger signal, 146, 148, 199
Anxiety-dreams, 170–1
Anxiety-state, 268
Archaic heritage, 98–101, 102 *n.*, 132–3, 167, 188, 190 *n.*, 200–1, 206–7, 240–1
Astruc, J., 42 *n.* 3
Aten, worship of, 21–31, 36, 41, 50, 59–61, 63–4, 69–70, 88, 113
Athene, 22, 45 *n.* 2
Atkinson, J. J. (*see also* Bibliography), 130–1
Aton (see *Aten*)
Atum, 21, 25 and *n.* 2
Auditory perception, 162
Austria invaded by Germany, 57, 103
Auto-erotism (*see* Masturbation)
Avoidances, 76
Azupirani, 11

Baalim, 69, 124
Baby equated with penis, 251
Babylon, 11 and *n.* 1, 111
Beethoven, 108
Behaviourism, 157 *n.*
Bernheim, H., 285 *n.*
Bes, 19
Bible, the, 7–9, 15 *n.*, 26–30, 32–6, 40–2, 44–8, 50, 57, 60–1, 66
Birth
  infantile theories of, 154, 234
  myths, 10–14
  symbols of, 12
  trauma of, 216
Bisexuality, 188, 243–4
Binding as symbol of castration, 190 *n.*
Bonaparte, Princess Marie, 247 *n.* 1
Bondage, sexual, 252 and *n.*
Boys'
  relation to father, 12, 79–80, 82, 87, 119, 125, 176, 189–90
  relation to mother, 75, 155, 189–91
  sexual development, 154–5, 188–192, 194, 200
Brain, anatomy of, 97, 144–5
Branson, J. S. H., 193 *n.* 1
Breast (*see* Sucking and breast)
Breasted, J. H. (*see also* Bibliography), 6
British sense of superiority, 112
Brunswick, Ruth Mack (*see also* Bibliography), 218

Canaan occupied by the Jews, 29, 37–8, 46, 48–9, 52, 60–1, 124
Cannibalism, 81–2
Case
  of analyst analysed, 221–2
  of '*Dora*', 257 *n.* 2
  of *Herr E.*, 215
  of a homosexual girl, 256
  of '*Little Hans*', 92 *n.* 1
  of '*Rat Man*', 256, 257 *n.* 2
  of '*Wolf Man*', 102 *n.*, 256, 261 *n.*
Casket as symbol, 11, 12
Castration
  complex, 84, 91, 92 *n.*, 99, 155, 190–1, 193–4, 200, 202–3, 250–2, 273, 276–7
  in primal horde, 81, 122
  of *Kronos* by *Zeus*, 278
  symbolized by binding, 190 *n.*
  symbolized by circumcision, 91, 92 *n.*, 122, 190
  threat, 79, 155, 189–91, 194, 200, 276–7
Catholic Church, 4, 55–7
Chamisso, A. de, 9 and *n.* 1
Character
  -analysis, 250
  -traits, 75–6, 79–80, 125, 155, 190, 216
Childhood (*see also* Infantile)
  dependence of, 146–7, 185, 187, 200, 206

impressions, 73–4, 77, 125–7, 130, 166, 218, 258–63, 266–8
Children (*see also* Parents and children)
and belief in omnipotence of thoughts, 113
compared to animals, 132
compared to primitive man, 82, 113
emotional impulses of, 134
neuroses of, 77, 99, 184
psycho-analysis of, 84
sexual abuse of, 187
sexual enlightenment of, 233–4
sexual researches of, 154
sexual theories of, 74, 154, 234
'Chosen people' (*see* Jews as 'chosen people')
Christianity (*see also* Catholic Church; Communion, Christian)
development of, from Judaism, 86, 88–91, 135–6
monotheism in, 85, 88–9, 136
Churchill, Sir W., 293 *n.*
Circumcision
as mark of being 'chosen', 60, 88, 91
equated with castration, 91, 92 *n.*, 122, 190
in Egypt, 26–7, 30 *n.* 2, 35, 39–40, 44–5
introduced to the Jews by *Moses*, 26–7, 29–30, 60, 62, 122
obligatory in the *Yahweh* religion, 39–40, 44
of *Moses* by his Midianite wife, 26, 44
Civilization, 55, 113–14, 133, 135, 185, 189, 201, 229, 244–5
Clitoris, 154 *n.* 2, 155, 299
Cloacal theory of birth, 154
Clytemnestra, 114 *n.* 1
'Collective' unconscious, 132
Cologne, 90
Communion, Christian, equated with totem meal, 84, 87, 131
'Complemental series', 73
Component instincts, 151–5, 186
Compromises
dreams as, 169–70, 203
symptoms as, 76, 78
Compulsion to repeat, 75–6
Compulsive character
of childhood impressions, 130
of delusions, 85
of religious phenomena, 72, 101, 112–13
of symptoms, 76
Condensation in dreams, 167–8
Conflicts, instinctual (*see* Instinctual conflicts)
Confusional states, 202
Conscience, 117, 205–6
Consciousness
exclusion from, in repression, 94–5
nature of, 157–62, 196, 283, 285–286
psycho-analysis returns repressed material to, 238, 267–8
relation to brain, 144–5
relation to ego, 95–6, 161–2, 165, 179
relation to preconscious, 97, 160–2
relation to unconscious, 95, 101, 159–61
Constitutional strength of instincts, 212, 220, 224
Constructions in psycho-analysis, 256, 258–66, 268
Coquette Corrigée, La (by *J. S. de La Noue*), 301 *n.* 2
Coudenhove-Kalergi, Count H., 292–3
Coudenhove-Kalergi, Count R., 292–3
Cows, Egyptian attitude to, 30 *n.* 2
Creative literature, 32, 41, 70–2, 87, 136, 149 *n.* 1, 191, 286
Credo quia absurdum, 85, 118
Crete, 45 *n.* 2, 70
Cryptomnesia, 245
Cyrus, 11, 13

Danger
anxiety as signal of, 146, 148, 199
avoidance of, 127, 146, 148, 199–200, 235, 237–8, 275, 277
Darwin, (*see also* Bibliography), 66–7
David, King, 42–3
Day's residues and dreams, 170
Death and Egyptian religion, 19–20, 24
Death instinct, 148–50, 154 and *n.* 1, 180, 186, 197–8, 212, 225 *n.* 1, 242–4, 246
Defence mechanisms (*see also* Ego and defence), 76–80, 200, 235–40, 249
Degeneracy, 152

Delusions
of mankind, 130, 269
psychotic, 85, 130, 172, 202, 218, 267–8
Depressive states, 252
Destructiveness (*see* Death instinct)
Diderot, D., 192
Diphasic onset of sexual function, 75, 153, 186
'Disavowal', 204, 273, 275
Displacement
in dreams, 167–8, 203, 267
in legends, 43
in neurosis, 268
in 'ultra-clear' memories, 266–267
of instinctual aim, 148, 155
Disraeli, B., 9
Distortion
as form of resistance, 95, 239
in creative literature, 191
in delusions, 85, 130
in dreams, 165, 167, 171, 258
in memories, 267–8
in symptom-formation, 127
in traditions, 26–7, 30, 33, 42–4, 70, 124, 129–30, 135–6
'*Dora*', case of, 257 *n.* 2
Dream-content, manifest, 165, 167–169
Dream-interpretation, 165–71, 177, 196
Dreams
anxiety-, 170–1
as compromises, 169–70, 203
characteristics of, 165
childhood impressions as source of, 126, 166
compared to symptoms, 171–2, 203
condensation in, 167–8
day's residues and, 170
displacement in, 167–8, 203, 267
distortion in, 165, 167, 171, 258
hallucinatory nature of, 162, 165, 199, 266
instinctual demands expressed in, 166–7, 169, 226
of neurotics, 202
of psychotics, 202
relaxation of resistance in, 161
secondary revision of, 167
sleep and, 165–6, 169–71
symbolism of, 98, 166, 169
waking life and, 166–7, 169–71
wish-fulfilment in, 166, 170–1
Dream-thoughts, latent, 165, 167–169
Dream-work, 165, 167–71
Dualistic theory of instincts, 243 *n.*, 244, 246
Dynamic view of mental processes, 97, 156, 226–7, 237, 258, 267

E., Herr, case of, 215
Ebyatar, 42
Echnaton (see *Akhenaten*)
Economic factors in mental processes (*see* Quantitative factors)
Education, 235, 248
Ego
alteration of, 77, 125, 172–3, 179–81, 212–15, 220–1, 224, 234–40, 274
and consciousness, 95–6, 161–2, 165, 179
and defence, 76–8, 200, 203–4, 213, 221, 230, 235–42, 274–6
and external world, 77, 99, 143, 146, 148, 163, 166, 172–3, 180, 199–206, 235
and id, 96–7, 145–9, 163–6, 172, 177–81, 186, 198–201, 205, 214, 235, 237, 240–1
and instincts, 116–17, 127, 166–7, 169–71, 199–200, 202–5, 212, 220, 223–7, 230, 235
and the preconscious, 96–7, 162–164
and super-ego, 97, 117, 146, 165, 172, 177, 205–6, 214, 235 *n.*, 242
and the unconscious, 96, 162
as reservoir of libido, 150–1
immature, 74, 200–1, 203, 220, 227
later development of, 75–6, 155, 190–1
neuroses as disorders of, 184–5, 200
overwhelming of, 78
principal characteristics of, 116, 145–8, 162, 198–9, 240
repressive forces of, 127, 185, 227, 236–7, 303
splitting of, 78, 143, 202–4, 273–4
strengthened by psycho-analysis, 173–80, 214, 220, 230, 232, 235, 238, 247, 249–50

Egypt
  Exodus from, 7, 16, 18 *n.*, 27–9, 31–3, 35, 37, 40, 44, 47–9, 60–1, 68, 111–12
  history of, 20–4, 28–9, 30 *n.* 2, 33–6, 47 and *n.* 3, 59
  religion of, 18–26, 31, 50, 59–66, 69–70, 85, 88, 111, 113
Egyptian, *Moses* an, 9, 14–20, 24, 27–41, 44, 50, 52, 103
Einstein, A., 149 *n.* 2
Eissler, K. R., 289
Electra complex, 194
Elephantine, island of, 63
Elohim, 40
Elohist, the, 62
Emission, 78
Empedocles of Acragas, 149 *n.* 2, 243–7
England
  anti-semitism in, 301
  Freud in, 4, 57–8, 103, 142
Epics, national, as transmitters of legend, 70–2
Eros (*see also* Libido; Sexual instinct) 148–51, 186, 197–8, 242–4, 246
Erotogenic zones, 151–3
Errors, 162, 284
Ethics (*see* Morality)
Evans, Sir Arthur, 45 *n.* 2, 70
Evolution, theory of, 66–7, 80
Excretory functions, 154
Exogamy, 82, 119, 121, 131–2
External world (*see also* Reality)
  adaptation to, 79, 116, 150, 156, 228, 237, 299
  detachment from, in neurosis and psychosis, 76–8, 162, 201–2, 267–9, 277
  ego's relation to, 77, 99, 143, 146, 148, 163, 166, 172–3, 180, 199–206, 235
  id and, 145, 197–9, 235
  super-ego and, 207
  'unknowable', 196–7
Ezra, 42 *n.* 4, 47

Fairy tales, 12, 81, 84
Family romance, 11–15
Fascism, 54
Father (*see also* Parents and children)
  ambivalent relation to, 82–3, 87, 121, 131, 134, 136, 176
  and castration threat, 79, 189–91, 276–7
  boy's relation to, 79–80, 82, 87, 119, 125, 176, 189–90
  equated with animal in animal-phobia, 82
  equated with God, 83–4, 88, 90–1, 133–4, 136
  equated with hero of legend, 109–110, 117
  fear of being eaten by, 277–8
  girl's relation to, 193
  of primal horde, 81–90, 94, 101, 110, 119, 121–2, 131, 133–6
  overcome by hero of legend, 11–12, 109–10
  super-ego inherits authority of, 117, 119–20
  will of, 121–2
Faust (*Goethe*), 123 *n.*, 207, 225, 238, 245
Fear (*see also* Anxiety; Phobias)
  as response to danger, 275
  of being eaten by father, 277–278
  of castration (*see* Castration complex)
  of loss of love, 200, 206
  of punishment, 277
Ferenczi, S. (*see also* Bibliography), 221 *n.*, 230
Fetish equated with missing female penis, 202–3
Fetishism, 143, 202–4, 204 *n.* 2, 273–4, 277
Finland, national epics of, 71
Fixation
  of libido, 151, 153, 155, 181, 191, 229, 241
  'primal', to mother, 216
  religious ritual as, 84–5
  to trauma, 75–7, 220
Fixierung, uses of word, 62 *n.*, 160 *n.*
Flaubert, G., 49
Fliess, W., 120 *n.* 1, 130 *n.*, 160 *n.*, 215, 226 *n.* 2, 251, 274
Fore-pleasure, 155
France, A., 249 *n.*
Fraternal alliance in primal horde, 82–4, 87, 119, 131–2, 136
Frauenliebe und -leben (by *Chamisso*,) 9 *n.* 1
Free association, 169, 177, 258, 261, 263, 264

Freud, Anna (*see also* Bibliography), 3, 297–8
Freud, Ernst, 297 *n.*, 301 *n.* 1
Freud, Sigmund, in England, 4, 57–8, 103, 142
Frustration, 231

Galton, F., 10
Geistigkeit (*see also* Intellectuality), meaning of word, 86 *n.* 1
Genitals
  and sexual instinct, 152
  development of, in childhood, 75
  female, and castration fear, 190, 202–3, 276–7
  primacy of, 154–6
Germany (*see also* Nazis)
  and the Reformation, 38
  invasion of Austria by, 57, 103
  legends of, 121
  national epics of, 71
Gilgamesh, 11 and *n.*
Girls (*see also* Women)
  relation to father, 193
  relation to mother, 125, 193–4
  sexual development in, 155, 188, 193–4
Glacial epoch, 153 *n.*
God (*see also Aten; Yahweh*)
  belief in the existence of, 122–3, 129
  father equated with, 83–4, 88, 90–1, 133–4, 136
  Mosaic, 50–2, 63–5, 70, 105–6, 110–15, 118–19, 124, 134
  of Christianity, 86, 88–9, 135
  of the Bible, 26, 32–3
Goethe, 89, 108, 123 *n.*, 125, 126 *n.* 2, 207, 225, 238, 245
'Götter Griechenlands, Die' (by *Schiller*), 101 *n.* 1
Göttingen, 297
Greek
  civilization, 244–5
  drama, 87
  myths (*see also Oedipus*), 11 *n.*, 70–1, 86, 121, 278
Greeks and Jews, 106, 115
Group psychology, 67, 70, 92–4, 132
Guilt, sense of, 87–8, 135–6, 142, 205, 300
  in Jewish people, 86–7, 134–6
  in neurotics, 179–81, 242–3, 265

Hallucinations, 162, 266–7, 277
Hallucinatory
  character of dreams, 162, 165, 199, 266
  confusion, 202
Hamlet, 192, 262
'*Hans, Little*', case of, 92 *n.* 1
Haremhab, 24, 29, 48, 60
Heine, 30 *n.* 2
Heliopolis, 19, 21, 22 and *n.* 1, 25 *n.* 2, 31, 47, 59–60
Henotheism, 128
Heracles, 11
Hereditary factors (*see also* Archaic heritage), 73, 98–101, 102 *n.*, 145, 147, 183–4, 206, 240, 299
  and acquired characters, 100, 102 *n.*, 132, 240–1
  and the id, 145, 147, 206, 299
Hero of legend, 10–16, 70, 87, 107–9, 133
  equated with father, 109–10, 117
Herod, 14
Herodotus (*see also* Bibliography), 43
Hieroglyphics, 43 *n.* 2
Historical and material truth, 129–30, 135, 256, 261, 267–9
Hoffmann, E. T. A., 126
Holiness, 26, 30, 39, 60, 106, 120–122
Homer, 70–1
Hominization, 75, 153
Homosexuality, 152, 155, 193–4, 243–4, 250
  female, 256
Horeb (*see* Sinai-Horeb)
Horus, 30 *n.* 2
Hosea, 36
Hunger as dream-instigator, 170
Hyksos period, 28
Hypnosis, 213, 230, 285
Hysteria, 222, 268

Id, the
  and ego, 96–7, 145–9, 163–6, 172, 177–81, 186, 198–201, 205, 214, 235, 237, 240–1
  and heredity, 145, 147, 206, 299
  and repression, 96–8, 163, 165, 178, 191, 204
  and the super-ego, 146–7, 206–7
  and the unconscious, 96–8, 101, 163–8, 171, 191

instinctual demands of, 96, 116, 145–6, 148, 169, 172–3, 197–9, 242
principal characteristics of, 96, 98, 145, 148
uncovered by psycho-analysis, 145 *n.* 2, 238–9
Identification, 79–82, 87, 125, 143, 190, 193, 299
Ikhnaton (*see Akhenaten*)
Ill, wish to be, 179–81
Image-making, prohibition against, 112, 114–15, 118
Imago, 3, 9 *n.* 2, 10, 17, 54, 61, 103
Immortality, 20, 26, 59
Impotence, sexual, 79, 149
Incest
among gods, kings and heroes, 120–1
horror of, 120 *n.* 2, 121
taboo on, 82, 120
Indian
national epics, 71
religion, 30 *n.* 2
Infantile (*see also* Childhood; Children)
amnesia, 74–5, 153, 186, 191, 258–60
sexuality, 74–5, 152–4, 186, 200–1, 300
Inhibitions, 76–7, 155, 166, 191, 206, 209, 228, 258, 299–300
Innsbruck, Psycho-Analytical Congress at, in 1927, 247 *n.* 2, 251
Instincts (*see also* Component instincts; Death instinct; Eros; Nutrition, instinct of; Self-preservative instinct; Sexual instinct)
ego and, 116–17, 127, 166–7, 169–71, 199–200, 202–5, 212, 220, 223–7, 230, 235
of animals, 100, 133
renunciation of, 82, 113, 116–20, 122–3, 127, 134, 155, 179, 185–6, 199–201, 204–5, 226–7
strength of, and aetiology of neurosis, 77, 95, 181, 183–6, 199–200, 212, 220–1, 223–7, 234, 275
taming of, 225–6
theory of, 159, 243 *n.*, 244–6
Instinctual
aim, displacement of, 148, 155
conflicts, 150, 214, 223–7, 230–3, 235, 244, 275–7, 299
demands of the id, 96, 116, 145–6, 148, 169, 172–3, 197–9, 242
impulses and dreams, 166–7, 169, 226
Intellectual
inhibitions, 300
problem solved unconsciously, 283–4
Intellectuality in Jewish religion, 19 and *n.*, 47, 64, 86 and *n.*, 88, 113–18, 128–9
International Psycho-Analytical Congress
at Innsbruck in 1927, 247 *n.* 2, 251
at Paris in 1938, 3
Interpretation of dreams (*see* Dream-interpretation)
Isaac, 44
Ishtar, 11
Isis, 30 *n.* 2
Israel in der Wüste (by *Goethe*), 89 *n.* 2
Israelites (*see* Jews)
Italy, Fascist regime in, 54

Jabneh, 115
Jacob, 27, 44
Jahve (*see Yahweh*)
Jaumer, 264
Jealousy, 106, 153, 189, 190 *n.*, 233
delusional, 202
Jehu, 40
Jerusalem, 15 *n.*, 63, 115
Jesus Christ, 14, 86–90, 101, 106, 135–6, 236, 291
Jethro, 34–5, 41
Jews
and circumcision, 26–7, 30, 60, 62, 88, 91, 122
as 'chosen people', 45, 60, 63, 65, 85–6, 88, 91, 105–6, 111–12, 115, 123, 134–5
characteristics of, 103, 105–7, 111–12, 115, 118, 123, 136–7, 292
literature and legends of, 32
persecution of, 57, 90–2, 105, 290–3, 301
religion of (*see also* God, Mosaic; *Yahweh*), 18–20, 25–8, 31–53, 58, 60–6, 68–72, 85–6, 88, 110–15, 123–4, 127–9, 133–6

Jocasta, 187, 191
Jochanan, 40, 45 *n.* 2
Jochanan ben Zakkai, 115
Jokes, 161
Jones, Ernest (*see also* Bibliography), 87 *n.*
Joseph and his brethren, 106
Josephus, Flavius (*see also* Bibliography), 13 *n.* 2, 236
Joshua, 35, 40, 45
Jung, C. G. (*see also* Bibliography), 73 *n.* 1
Jupiter, 45 *n.* 2
Justice, 82

Kadesh, founding of the new religion at, 33–41, 44, 46, 48–51, 61–2, 68, 93
Kant, I., 300
Karma, 11 and *n.*
King and queen as symbols, 12
Kissing, 152
Knossos, 45 *n.* 2

Laius, 187, 191
La Noue, J. S. de, 301 *n.* 2
Latency
  in the history of the Jewish religion, 68–9, 85
  of neurosis, 77
  period in childhood, 74–5, 77, 79, 80, 153 and *n.*, 155, 186
Lays of Ancient Rome (by *Macaulay*), 71 *n*
Legends (*see also* Hero of legend; Myths; Tradition), 10, 32, 81, 84, 167
  of *Moses*, 7–16, 32–3, 35–6
  of *Oedipus*, 11, 13, 187, 190 *n.*, 191, 205
Leonardo da Vinci, 108
Levites, 15 *n.* 1, 38–9, 49, 51, 62
Libido
  'adhesiveness' of, 241
  damming up of, 231
  defined, 149–51
  development of, 154–7, 200, 229, 234, 244
  ego as reservoir of, 150–1
  fixation of, 151, 153, 155, 181, 191, 229
  mobility of, 241
  narcissistic, 150
  object-, 148, 150–1
  periodicity of, 153 *n.*
Life-instinct (*see* Eros)
Linguistic usage, 98–9, 114, 132, 166
Lipps, T., 158, 286
Literature, creative, 41, 70–2, 87, 136, 149 *n.* 1, 191, 286
London, 57
Love
  being in, 151, 176
  fear of loss of, 200, 206
  unsatisfied, and sense of guilt, 300

Ma'at, 19, 21, 50–1, 59
Macaulay, T. B., 71 *n.* 1
Magic, 19, 24, 51, 66, 86, 88, 113
Mahabharata, 11 *n.*
Mahommedanism, 92–3
Masculine and feminine, 188
'Masculine protest' (*Adler*), 250–2
Masochism, 154 *n.* 1, 222, 243, 252, 265
Masochistic phantasies, 79, 222
Maspero, G., 6
Masturbation, 79, 155, 189–90, 193, 276–7, 300
  phantasies, 190
Material and historical truth, 129–30, 135, 256, 261, 267–9
Matriarchy, 82, 83, 113–14, 118, 131–2
Medicine and psycho-analysis, 216
Memory (*see also* Amnesia; Screen memories)
  and affect, 225 *n.* 1
  and archaic heritage, 99–101, 102 *n.*
  distortion in, 267–8
  gaps in, 220
  perception and, 205
Memory-traces, 143, 162, 199
  unconscious, 93–4, 98, 126, 197, 266–8
Men, sexual development of (*see also* Boys), 250–1
Meneptah (*see Merenptah*)
Menopause, 212, 226
Menstruation, 152 *n.*, 186
Mephistopheles (in *Goethe's Faust*), 123 *n.*
Merenptah, 29 *n.* 2, 48–9, 61
Meribah-Kadesh (*see* Kadesh)
Metapsychology, 225, 226 *n.* 2, 234
Meynert, T., 202 *n.* 1

Midianites, 34–7, 39–41, 46, 61
Mind and body, relation between, 148, 157–8, 161–2, 283
Minos, 45 *n.* 2, 70
Mis-hearing, 284
Mis-reading, 284
Mithras, 87 *n.*
Monotheism
  as a delusion of mankind, 130
  Christian, 85, 88–9, 136
  Egyptian, 20–3, 25–6, 31, 63–6, 85, 111
  genesis of, 56, 89, 101, 103, 108, 110, 128–9, 133, 135
  Jewish, 18–20, 25–6, 31, 50, 58, 65–6, 85, 88–9, 92, 111, 128–9, 134
Morality, 82–3, 86, 118–20, 122, 131, 134, 206
Moses
  an Egyptian, 9, 14–20, 24, 27–41, 44, 50, 52, 103
  character of, 32–3
  circumcision introduced to the Jews by, 26, 29–30, 44, 60, 62, 122
  derivation of name, 7–9, 17
  God of (*see* God, Mosaic)
  legends about, 7–16, 32–3, 35–6
  murder of, 36–7, 47–50, 58, 60, 62, 68–9, 89–90, 93–4, 101, 110
  prototype of father, 110
  prototype of super-ego, 117
  resurrected in *Jesus Christ*, 90
  two personalities represented by, 34–5, 41, 44, 48, 50, 52
Mother
  child's attachment to, 79, 188–94, 216, 261
  child's identification with, 79, 125, 190, 193
  girl's hostility to, 125, 193
  of the primal horde, 81
Mother-goddesses, 45 *n.* 2, 83, 84 *n.*, 88
Motility, 145, 150, 166
Mount Sinai (*see* Sinai-Horeb)
Mycenae, 70
Mysticism, 86, 300
Myths (*see also* Hero of legend; Legends)
  excluded from *Aten* religion, 24
  Greek, 11 *n.*, 70–1, 121, 178
  of birth, 10–14
  of exposure, 11–15, 17, 28 *n.* 2, 58
  symbolism of, 190

Nancy, 285 *n.*
Napoleon I, 9
Narcissism
  of minor differences, 91 *n.*
  pride as, 117–18
  primary, 148, 150, 188, 200
Narcissistic
  libido, 150
  mortifications, 74, 76
Nazis, 4, 54, 57, 92
Nefertiti, 21 *n.* 3
Nehemiah, 42 *n.* 4, 47
Nestroy, J., 228, 265
Neurones, 168 *n.* 2
Neuroses (*see also* Hysteria; Traumatic neurosis)
  aetiology of, 73–80, 126–7, 153, 183–7, 200–1, 236
  and belief in omnipotence of thoughts, 113
  and pressure of civilization, 185
  and trauma, 67–8, 72–80, 97, 180, 184–5, 212, 220, 222–4, 226, 234, 275
  curability of, 172–5, 180–2, 211–14, 220–5, 229, 237
  displacement in, 268
  of children, 77, 99, 184
  recurrence of, 218, 222–3, 241
  religion compared to, 55, 58, 80, 85, 92–3, 101
Neurotic symptoms (*see* Symptoms)
Neurotics
  and analogy of prehistoric landscape, 299
  compared to normal persons, 72–3, 124–5, 156, 165, 183–4, 225, 235
  psycho-analysis of, 89, 166, 225
Neveu de Rameau, Le (by *Diderot*), 192 *n.* 2
Nietzsche, F., 297
Nile, 7–8, 13
Nirvana, 198
Normal persons compared to neurotics, 72–3, 124–5, 156, 165, 183–4, 225, 235
Normality
  a fiction, 235, 239, 250

Normality—*contd.*
as aim of psycho-analysis, 219–20, 235
Nutrition, instinct of, 149, 154, 188

Object-choice, 126, 143, 156, 188, 193
in fetishism, 203
Object-libido, 148, 150–1
Obsessions, 126, 135
Oedipus
complex, 79, 99, 155, 187, 189, 192–4, 200, 205–6
legend, 11, 13, 187, 190 *n.*, 191, 205
Oedipus Rex (by *Sophocles*), 187
On (*see* Heliopolis)
Oral erotic phase, 153–5, 229, 278
Oresteia (of *Aeschylus*), 114
Orestes, 114 *n.* 1
Organic illness, 180, 212
Orgasm, 300
Original sin, 135
Osiris, 20, 24, 26
Overwork, 226 *n.* 2
Oxford, Edward de Vere, Earl of, 192 *n.* 1

Pain, 161, 183, 201, 225 *n.* 1
Pallas Athene, 22, 45 *n.* 2
Paranoia (*see* Delusions)
Parapraxes, 177, 261, 264, 284–5
Parents
analyst as successor to, 175–6, 181
and children (*see also* Father; Mother), 12, 99, 117, 119, 146, 185, 190, 200, 206
super-ego as successor to, 117, 119–20, 146–7, 175, 185, 205–6
symbols for, 12
Paris, 11
Paris, 3, 289
Parricide in the primal horde, 81–3, 86–7, 89–90, 101, 119, 131, 134–6
Passive sexual attitude, 188, 190, 194, 250–2, 252 *n.*
Passover, the feast of, 111
Patriarchy, 113–14, 118, 131, 133
Paul, St., 86–9, 135
Penis (*see also* Phallic phase; Castration; Circumcision), 79, 154 *n.* 2, 155, 189–90
attributed to females, in fetishism, 202–3
-envy, 155, 193–4, 197, 250–1
equated with baby, 251
Perceptual system, 97, 145, 157, 159–62, 196, 198–9, 205
Periodicity, sexual, 153 *n.*, 186
Perseus, 11
Perversion (*see also* Fetishism), 152, 155, 187
Peter Schlemihl (by *Chamisso*), 9 *n.* 1
Phallic phase, 154–5, 189, 193, 229, 251
Phantasies
masochistic, 79, 222
masturbation, 190
primal, 102 *n.*, 133, 189
sadistic, 79
sexual, 155
'ultra-clear', 266
wishful, 85, 87, 89
Pharaoh's daughter and *Moses*, 7–8, 13
Philosophy and psycho-analysis, 158–9, 282–3, 286
Phobias (*see also* Anxiety; Fear), 76
animal-, 82, 84
Phylogenetic heritage (*see* Archaic heritage)
Pigs, Egyptian attitude to, 30 *n.* 2
Pinchas, 15 *n.*
Plato, 149 *n.* 1
Pleasure principle, 116–17, 146, 154, 198, 205, 235, 237, 243
Polonius, 262
Polytheism, 18–19, 23, 65, 83, 88, 91, 133
Pompeii, 260
Preconscious, 96–7, 160–7, 170, 181
and speech, 97, 143, 162, 199
Preservation of the species, 157, 186
'Priestly Code', 42, 46, 65–6
Primal
horde, 81–90, 94, 101, 110, 119, 121–2, 131, 133–6
phantasies, 102 *n.*, 133, 189
scene, 78–9, 187
Primary process, 164, 168, 198, 225, 297
Primitive peoples
and incest, 121
compared to children, 82, 113
religion in, 93, 112–13, 128
Prohibitions (*see* Taboo)
Psychical, nature of the, 282–6

Psychical
apparatus, 145–7, 157–64, 183, 196–205, 226 *n.* 2, 237, 300
energy, 97, 159, 163–4, 168, 199, 204 *n.* 1, 242–3
inertia, 231, 241 *n.* 1, 241–2
Psycho-analysis
and American prosperity, 216–17
and biology, 195
and Catholic Church, 55
and literature, 286
and medicine, 216
and personality of analyst, 247–9
and philosophy, 158–9, 282–3, 286
and science, 158–9, 163, 196–7, 282, 286
constructions in, 256, 258–66, 268
criticisms of, 197, 257, 282
duration of, 215–24, 230, 234, 247, 249–50
findings of, 82, 94, 98–9, 124–32, 144, 152, 164, 187, 194
fundamental rule of, 174, 176, 179
intervenes in patient's real life, 232–3
of children, 84
of neurotics, 89, 166, 225
prophylactic power of, 213–14, 223, 230–2, 234
removal of repressions in, 212, 219–20, 228–9, 238, 257, 265, 267–8
resistance to (*see* Resistance)
restores forgotten experiences, 74, 126, 191
technique of, 89, 153, 159, 172–82, 196–7, 217–19, 223, 231–3, 238–9, 256–63, 265–6, 268
therapeutic aspect of, 173–82, 214–18, 220–4, 226–32, 234–5, 238–43, 247, 249, 265–8
uncovers what is hidden in the id, 145 *n.* 2, 238–9
Psychoneuroses (*see* Neuroses)
Psychosis (*see also* Delusions), 76, 85, 161, 171–3, 183, 195, 201–2, 235, 267–8, 274, 277
precipitating cause of, 201–2
Puberty, 75, 95, 152–3, 155, 191, 212
outbreak of neurosis at, 77, 79, 222, 226
Punishment, 185
fear of, 277
need for, 135, 242

Quantitative or economic factors, 73, 128, 156, 172, 181–4, 191, 212, 214, 226–30, 234, 240

Ra (*see Re'*)
Ra-mose, 9
'*Rat Man*', case of, 256, 257 *n.* 2
Re', 19, 21, 25 *n.* 2
Reaction-formations, 213
Reality (*see also* External world)
-principle, 116, 199
psychical and external, 76, 130 *n.*
-testing, 162, 199
Redemption, 86–7, 89, 135–6
Reformation, the, 38
Regression, 156, 277–8
Reik, T., 102 *n.*
Religion
a neurosis of humanity, 55, 58, 80, 84–5, 92–3
Christian (*see* Catholic Church; Christianity)
compulsive character of, 72, 101, 112–13
holiness of, 120
in Soviet Russia, 54
Indian, 30 *n.* 2
instinctual renunciation and, 119
of *Aten* (*see Aten*)
of Egypt (*see* Egypt, religion of)
of the Jews (*see* Jews, religion of)
of primitive peoples, 93, 112–13, 128
origins of, 83, 119, 128–9, 131
Repeat, compulsion to, 75–7
Repressed, return of, 80, 86, 88, 94–5, 127, 132–3, 248, 267
Repression
and the id, 96–8, 163, 165, 178, 191, 204
and resistance to psycho-analysis, 178–9
and the unconscious, 94–6, 101, 165–6, 178, 181, 191–2, 251
as exclusion from consciousness, 94–5, 160–1
by the ego, 127, 185, 227, 236–7, 303
of instinctual impulses, 127, 155, 185–6, 200, 226–7

Repression—*contd.*
of traumatic memories, 68, 187
'primal', 216
removal of, by psycho-anlaysis, 212, 219–20, 228–9, 235, 257, 265, 267–8
Reproductive function, 152, 157, 186–7
Resistance
of the ego, 238–42
of the id, 242
repression as, 95, 160–1
to psycho-analysis, 177–81, 212–213, 215, 217, 219, 247, 257, 262–3, 265, 267
transference-, 252
Revolte des Anges, La (by *A. France*), 249 *n.*
Rhondda, Lady, 301 *n.* 1
Rilke, Rainer Maria, 297
Roman Catholicism, 4, 55–7
Romulus, 11, 13
Roux, W., 185
Russia, religion in, 54

Sadistic-anal phase, 154–5, 229
Sadistic
interpretation of sexual act, 74
phantasies, 79
Sargon of Agade, 11
Schuler, F., 101 *n.*
Schuemann, H., 70
Schumann, R., 9 *n.* 1
Science and psycho-analysis, 158–9, 163, 196–7, 282, 286
Screen memories, 74
Secondary process, 164, 225
Secondary revision of dreams, 167
Seduction, sexual, 75–6, 187–8, 276
Self-preservative instinct, 145, 148, 154, 180, 186, 199, 205
Selinunte, 245
Sensory perception (*see* Perceptual system)
Sensory stimuli, 97–8, 145–6, 159, 198–9
auditory, 162
visual, 162
Seth, 30 *n.* 2
Sexual
abstinence, 118
act (*see also* Primal scene), 74, 120, 149, 170
aim, 155–6
bondage, 252 and *n.*
enlightenment of children, 233–4
excitation, 186, 189
function, diphasic onset of, 75, 153, 186
impotence, 79, 149
instinct (*see also* Eros), 116, 118, 142, 151–7, 186–7, 201
periodicity, 152 *n.*, 186
phantasies, 155
researches of children, 154
seduction, 75–6, 187–8, 276
theories of children, 74, 154, 234
Shakespeare, 65 *n.*, 192, 262
Shaw, G. B., 54 *n.* 2
Shechem, the prince of, 27
Shiloh, 15 *n.*
Shittim, 37
Shock, 226 *n.* 2
Sinai-Horeb, 32–4, 36, 48, 133
Sleep, 78, 95, 146, 161, 165–6, 169–71, 195, 199
Slips
of the pen, 284
of the tongue, 284
Smith, W. Robertson (*see also* Bibliography), 130–2
Social organization of man, 81–3, 119, 122, 131, 146, 180, 240–1
Sophocles, 187
Sorcery (*see* Magic)
Speech, 97, 99, 113, 114 *n.* 2, 132, 162, 166, 199
and the preconscious, 97, 143, 162, 199
Stein, Charlotte von, 126 *n.* 2
Stephen, St., 9 *n.* 2
Stimuli (*see* Sensory stimuli)
Sublimation, 86, 155, 181
Suckling and breast, 154, 188–9, 194, 299
Suggestion, 176, 213, 262
Suicidal impulses, 150, 180
Super-ego, 97, 116–17, 148, 150
and ego, 97, 117, 146, 165, 172, 177, 205–6, 214, 235 *n.*, 242
and id, 146–7, 206–7
equated with conscience, 173, 205
partly unconscious, 162
represents cultural past, 206
severity of, 180–1, 205
successor to Oedipus complex, 205–6

successor to parents, 117, 119–20, 146–7, 175, 185, 205–6
Superstition, 88, 229
Symbol
casket as, 11, 12
king and queen as, 12
of birth, 12
of castration, 91, 92 *n.*, 122, 190
of parent-child relationship, 12
toe as, 278
water as, 11, 12
Symbolism
and archaic heritage, 102 *n.*, 240–1
of dreams, 98, 166, 169
of language, 98–9, 132
of myths, 190
Symposium (of *Plato*), 149 *n.* 1
Symptoms, neurotic
aggravated by treatment, 265
as compromises, 76, 78
as 'return of the repressed', 127
as substitute satisfactions, 127, 186, 201, 226, 258
distortion in, 127
incubation period of, 67, 184
religious phenomena compared to, 80
removed by psycho-analysis, 175, 215–16, 219
result of trauma, 74, 77
sense of guilt as, 243

Taboo, 83, 119, 131
on image-making, 112, 114–15, 118
on incest, 82, 120
on use of god's name, 40
Telephos, 11
Tell el-'Amarna, 23, 24 and *n.* 4, 29, 49, 60 *n.*
Tentation de Saint Antoine, La (by *Flaubert*), 49 *n.* 2
Tertullian, 85 *n.* 1
Thebes, 6, 19, 23, 25 *n.* 2, 110 *n.* 3
Thothmose, 9
Thought-processes, 76, 97, 107, 114, 157, 159, 162, 196, 199
Thoughts, belief in the omnipotence of, 113
Time and Tide, 290, 301
Times, The, 6 *n.*
Titus, 115
Tiye, Queen, 110 *n.* 3
Toe as symbol, 278
Topographical view of mental processes, 96–7, 161, 204, 226–7, 234, 241
Totem
animal, 19, 82, 85, 119, 131, 133
meal, 82–4, 87, 131
Totemism, 82–5, 119, 131–2
Tradition, 52, 68–72, 93–4, 99–101, 124, 127–9, 146
distortion in, 26–7, 30, 33, 42–4, 70, 124, 129–30, 135–6
Transference, 174–7, 179, 181, 215, 218, 221–2, 231–3, 239, 258–9
ambivalence of, 175–7
-resistance, 252
Trauma
and aetiology of neurosis, 67–8, 72–80, 97, 99, 180, 184–5, 212, 220, 222–4, 226, 234, 275
castration fear as, 155, 190
fixation to, 75–7, 220
in history of human race, 80
in history of Jews, 52
of birth, 216
Traumatic neurosis, 67–8, 184
Truth, historical and material, 129–30, 135, 256, 261, 267–9
Tut'ankhamun, 260
Tut'ankhaten, 23
Tuthmosis III, 21
Tuthmosis the sculptor, 60 *n.*

'Ultra-clear' recollections, 266–7
Unconscious, the
and repression, 94–6, 101, 165–6, 178, 181, 191–2, 251
relation to consciousness, 95, 101, 159–61
relation to ego, 96, 162
Unconscious
memory-traces, 93–4, 98, 126, 197, 266–8
mental processes, 95–7, 101, 126, 158–74, 178–9, 181, 186, 191, 248, 263, 283–6
wish, 166
Unpleasure, 116–17, 146, 183, 235, 237, 239

Vagina, 154 and *n.* 2
Vienna, 4, 54, 103, 142, 217–18, 297, 301
Visual perceptions, 162

Waking life and dreams, 166–7, 169–71
War of 1914–18, 216–18
Water as symbol, 11–12
Weaning, 189
Wesen des Antisemitismus, Das (by *Count H. Coudenhove-Kalergi*), 292–3
Wish, unconscious, 166
Wish-fulfilment
  in delusions, 267
  in dreams, 166, 170–1
  in phantasies, 85, 87, 89
'*Wolf Man*', case of, 102 *n.*, 256, 261 *n.*
Womb, sleep as return to, 166
Women, sexual development of (*see also* Girls), 251, 256
Words, magic of, 113

Yahu, 63
Yahweh, 6, 22, 26, 32 7, 39–41, 44–52, 61 6, 68–72, 92, 111, 124
Yahwist, the, 42, 62
Yes and no, significance of, in psycho-analysis, 257, 261–3

Zerrissene, Der (by *Nestroy*), 265 and *n.* 2
Zethos, 11
Zeus, 22, 45 *n.* 2, 278
Zion, conspiracy of 'Elders of', 85
Zweig, A., 3

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